

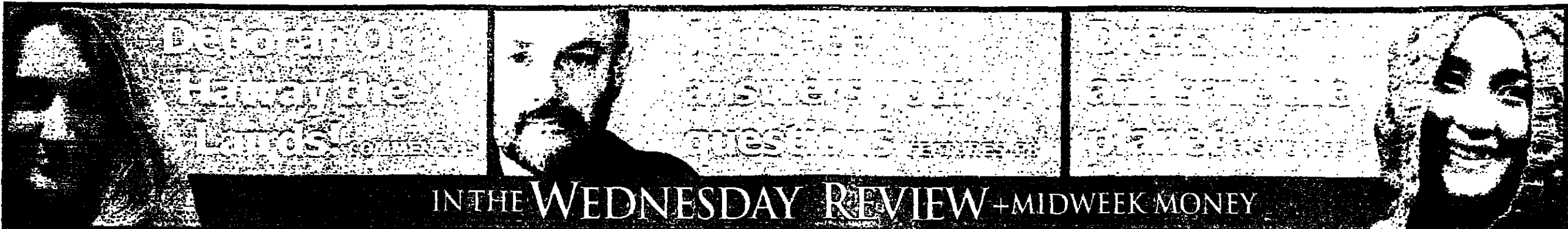


THE INDEPENDENT

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IN THE WEDNESDAY REVIEW + MIDWEEK MONEY

Heal rifts or lose election, Labour warns ministers

LABOUR HAS admitted that it will lose the next General Election unless the Cabinet ends the divisions which have provoked Tony Blair's biggest crisis since he won power. The warning is contained in an internal memo from senior party officials to staff at Labour's Millbank headquarters in London, outlining the party's strategy for winning a second term.

"In an information age of fast, swift communications,

BY ANDREW GRICE
Political Editor

modern political parties cannot continue to survive in government if they are disunited or carry major weaknesses," says the memo, which has been passed to *The Independent*.

Officials at Millbank said there was strong pressure from grassroots party members for an end to the feuding between allies of Mr Blair and Gordon

Brown, which has been blamed for the resignations of Peter Mandelson, Geoffrey Robinson, and Charlie Whelan, the Chancellor's press secretary. One Labour source said: "I am sure the entire Cabinet has got the message now. We now have an opportunity to move forward and concentrate on delivering our promises."

Labour's private opinion polling shows the Tories are still seen as more divided than

Labour. One reason for this is that Mr Blair is seen as a much stronger leader than William Hague. However, Labour officials are alarmed by a sharp increase since last summer in the number of voters who regard the Government as "sleazy" and "arrogant" - a trend they expect to continue since the revelation of Mr Mandelson's £373,000 personal loan from Mr Robinson.

One in three people now

believes Labour is "getting sleazy", while half the public thinks the Government is "getting too arrogant and out of touch." A majority still think Labour "can be trusted," although the figure has dropped since last July.

Mr Blair, who begins a three-day visit to South Africa today following his family holiday in the Seychelles, hopes to turn the tide by getting "back to business" and switching the focus

to the Government's plans to improve public services.

But he faced further controversy yesterday as friends of Mr Whelan revealed that he planned to write a book exposing the deep divisions at the heart of the Government.

Pressure mounted on Mr Whelan to leave his Treasury post immediately rather than wait until he finds another job. He hopes to stay for a few weeks but Downing Street

wants him to quit within days.

David Heathcoat-Amory, the Tory treasury spokesman, said: "Mr Whelan seems to be timing his departure to suit his own job prospects... He should be dismissed immediately and given no more privileged access to Budget planning."

Lord Falconer visit the Dome, page 2; Whelan book talks, page 2; Anne McElvoy, Review, page 3; Ken Livingstone, Review, page 4



Cuts by Brown add to crisis in NHS

BY COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

GORDON BROWN is planning to put further pressure on the NHS, struggling to cope with an influenza outbreak, by demanding cuts to cover an inflation-busting pay rise for doctors and nurses.

It is feared this could exacerbate the crisis in the NHS caused by staffing shortages and the flu outbreak, which has left many hospitals over-stretched. The issue surfaced because the pay-review bodies for 1 million public-sector workers are expected to report within the month to Tony Blair, and ministers are braced for recommended pay rises of over 5 per cent for nurses and doctors.

Frank Dobson, Secretary of State for Health, has told colleagues he wants to pay the nurses in full, without staging, to ease the shortage of staff. The shortages are so severe that a hospital in North Tyneside has hired a doctor from Australia and nurses from the Philippines are being recruited in London.

Mr Brown has warned the Cabinet to keep pay rises in line

INSIDE

■ How a catalogue of problems has hit the NHS page 5

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with the Treasury's 2.5 per cent inflation target. Yesterday ministerial sources told *The Independent* that although the pay rises could be approved by the Cabinet, they are likely to be "under-funded", leaving health authorities to meet some of the extra pay bill from their own resources, further squeezing the cash for patient care.

The problem facing the Chancellor threatens to add to pressure on hospitals, where there is evidence of patients being left on trolleys as doctors try to deal with bed and staff shortages. The British Medical



Patients waiting for treatment at St James's hospital in Leeds, one of the cities worst hit by the flu outbreak with an increase in hospital admissions 26 per cent higher than this time last year

Association, which has been gathering evidence to present to ministers, has had reports of district nurses being moved out of family doctor surgeries to plug the gaps in hospitals, leaving GPs furious at the loss of their nursing staff.

"It's pretty awful. There is not an epidemic as such but the way that things have been managed on the ground is pretty poor. Staff are being removed from general practice to work in hospitals with scant consultation. The Midlands and Liverpool have been hit pretty badly by the flu, but it is not clas-

sified as an epidemic and we have been getting complaints about the way it has been handled. It was hardly unexpected, but we are getting some pretty awful tales," said a BMA source.

A big increase in pay for nurses and doctors is regarded by ministers as vital to ease staff shortages. Mr Dobson set a target of training an extra 6,000 nurses over the next three years, when he announced an additional £21bn for the health service over the same period. He privately fears the crisis means he may

fail to meet his pledge, in March, that waiting lists "will be shorter" by next April, in spite of priority given to slashing numbers waiting, including a drive to end "bed blocking" by getting the elderly out of hospital with community support.

Because of the flu outbreak more than 45,000 people had to cancel Christmas plans and take to their beds. Experts said numbers might continue to rise over the next few weeks.

Emergency services in the North West are bearing the brunt of the crisis, which has

seen 999 calls double in some of the worst-hit areas. Yorkshire hospitals were reported to be close to breaking-point only two months after they received £21m to ease winter pressure, prompting calls from MPs to find out how the money had been spent.

As the outbreak spread south, Mr Dobson gave details of how the £250m allocated before Christmas for the winter crisis was being spent on 2,000 initiatives. They include £750,000 extra for improving intensive care and high dependency care in London.

Iraq and US in dogfight over no-fly zone

AMERICAN AIRCRAFT fired missiles at Iraqi planes in two incidents yesterday - the first aerial clashes between the two sides in six years.

The incidents, which occurred south-west of Baghdad at about 7.30am GMT, follow two attacks by US aircraft on Iraqi missile batteries, after surface-to-air missiles were launched at them, and is part of a pattern of rapidly escalating military

BY ANDREW MARSHALL
in Washington

tension. Weeks after the US and British air campaign against Iraqi military targets, Baghdad is intent on showing it is capable of challenging the allied forces in the air.

In yesterday's incidents, US aircraft were patrolling the no-fly zone over southern Iraq when they detected about a

dozen airborne Iraqi Mirages and MiG fighters. They fired missiles at them, but were not sure whether any hit their targets. One Iraqi fighter was seen to crash, but it was thought it had run out of fuel. All the American planes returned safely to base.

Iraqi missiles have been fired at allied aircraft in the northern and southern no-fly zones in the past two weeks,

triggering attacks by American aircraft. Iraq has said since 1996 that it considers the no-fly zones illegitimate, but has started to assert itself over them in the past month.

This growing tension is unnerving states in the region, particularly Saudi Arabia and Turkey, where US fighters are based to patrol the zones. It also shows that despite intensive air strikes, the US and Britain did

not eliminate Iraq's ability to hit back at British and American forces. It is the first time that US aircraft have fought their Iraqi counterparts since a US fighter shot down an Iraqi aircraft in 1992.

Underlining Baghdad's defiance, Saddam Hussein yesterday called on Arabs to overthrow regimes allied with the US. "Revolt against those who boast of friendship with the United

States," he said in a speech to mark the anniversary of the founding of the Iraqi army. "Revolt against foreign powers, their aggression and their armies and chase them. Kick out injustice and its perpetrators."

According to the US, Iraq has clamped down hard on internal opposition in recent weeks, executing hundreds of Shia Muslims from the south and holding thousands hostage.

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An element of threat is not necessarily a bad thing. I personally respond to threats.

— Chris Woodhead, Chief Inspector of Schools, on his appointment



The criticism of Ofsted is that there is a lot of polemic in your reports but that this is not backed up by evidence.

— Margaret Hodge MP, Junior Schools Minister



The Chief Inspector has a long way to go to recapture teachers' confidence. My advice to him is to spin less and listen more.

— Doug McAvoy, general secretary of the NUT

Ofsted chief hits back at 'demonisers'

THE CHIEF Inspector of Schools attacked his critics yesterday, saying union leaders and academics were damaging the reputation of teachers by "demonising" inspectors.

Chris Woodhead said he wanted to silence the "tiny but vocal minority of critics" who were defending vested interests in the profession. He published a Mori poll of 1,280 primary schools showing that four out of five were happy with their inspection by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted).

But an argument broke out as Mr Woodhead accused a leading headteacher of "peddling disinformation" by claiming inspectors had a secret quota for the number of failing schools.

Mr Woodhead released the Mori survey after the National Union of Teachers produced its own poll saying that fewer than one in five schools believed inspection led to an improvement in standards.

The Ofsted poll found three-quarters of schools felt feedback from inspectors provided a helpful agenda for improving standards; 82 per cent found school reports fair and accurate. The poll also found 35 per cent of schools believed the benefits of inspection outweighed detrimental effects although 27 per cent thought the opposite. Mr Woodhead said the poll "paints a picture I can recognise from all my visits to schools and meetings with teachers and heads".

He dismissed the NUT survey as "seriously flawed", saying: "The vast majority of headteachers believe their inspections to be rigorous and professional and contribute to school improvement. The

BY BEN RUSSELL
AND JUDITH JUDD

teaching unions are in the business of protecting the interests of their members... Ofsted's primary audience is the public, parents and children. I don't think unions are [best] protecting their members in this way. The image and the status of the teaching profession will rise, one, when the general public sees that the teaching profession is prepared to accept the kind of accountability that other professions face, and two, when standards rise."

He blamed some heads for adding to the stress of inspection but added: "In part it is down to the demonisation of Ofsted by those who should know better. Do we as a nation believe our schools should be accountable? My answer is yes, certainly. [Tony] Blair and [David] Blunkett's answer is yes."

The NUT study is the latest in a number of claims and counter-claims about Ofsted and Mr Woodhead. In autumn the Commons Education and Employment Committee began an investigation into its work.

Since being appointed four years ago, Mr Woodhead has inspired hatred and admiration. Mention of his name brings boos and hisses at teacher conferences. The battle is not just about personalities but the proportions of stick and carrot to use in improving schools.

A psychologist yesterday blamed Mr Woodhead's style for teachers' response to him. Chris Kyriacous, an educational psychologist at York University, said: "He has a confrontational style. As a manager it is bad psychology to

stress the negative and it does not help to raise standards."

In February, Mr Woodhead accused three professors of education of being "at the heart of darkness" over failing pupil performance. They said he had misrepresented their views. He also attacked academics for wasting £50m a year on research of "dubious quality and value".

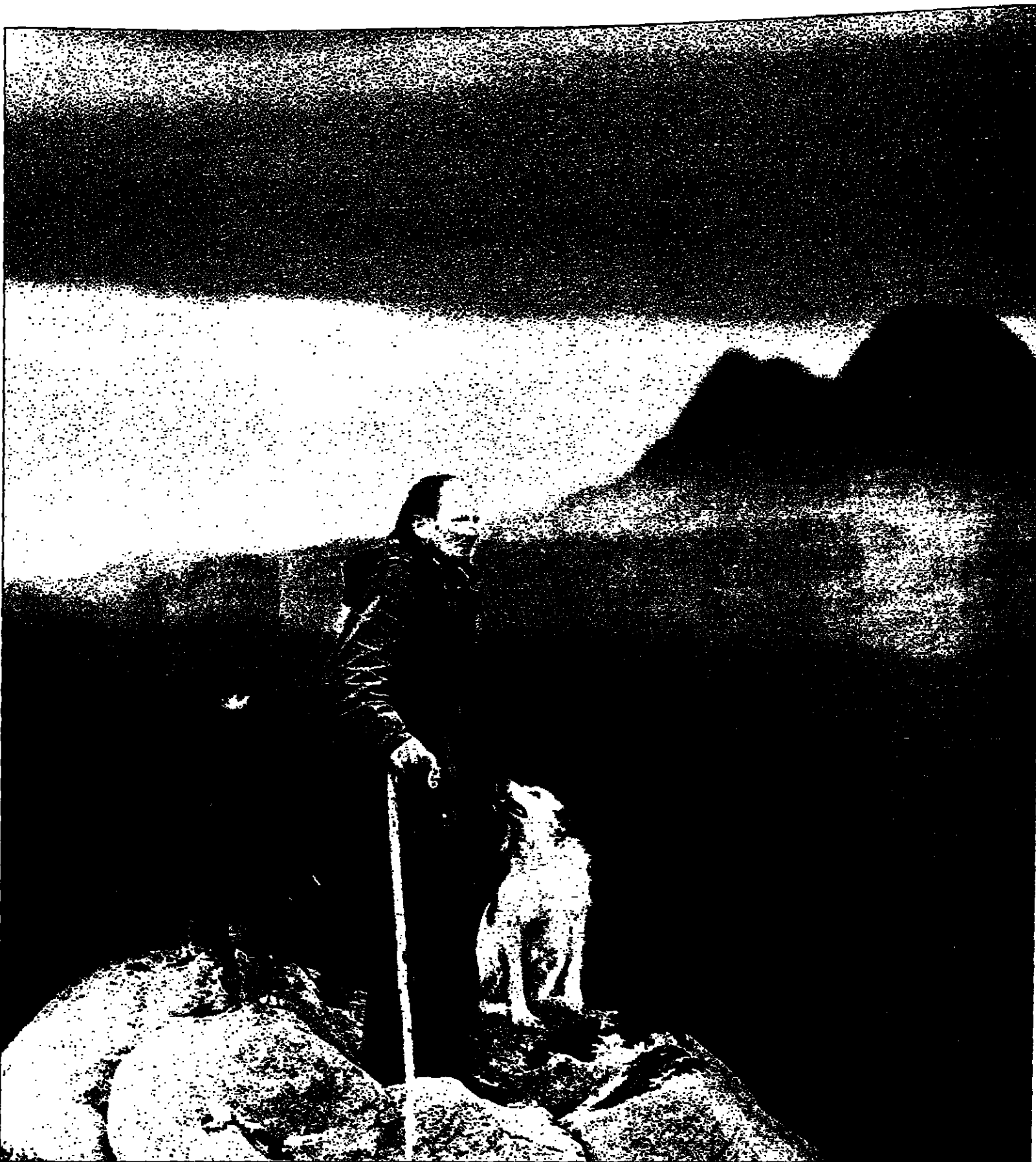
In March, Peter Mortimore, of London University's Institute of Education, summoned a meeting of academics who demanded a review of teacher training inspections.

The National Association of Head Teachers told the select committee one-quarter of heads said staff had been awarded grades during inspections for lessons they had not taught.

Yesterday, Mr Woodhead attacked Liz Paver, past president of the National Association of Head Teachers, who said inspectors set out to fail 2 per cent of schools. She said: "In its first year of inspecting secondary schools, Ofsted had to invent a new category of 'nearly failing' schools, because it couldn't come up with enough that were failing." Mr Woodhead said her comments were "dangerous and mischievous nonsense".

Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers, said: "Chris Woodhead is proud that 80 per cent of those who responded judged the inspections 'satisfactory' but when exactly the same percentage of schools and lessons were found 'satisfactory' by Ofsted, the result was a devastating criticism by Mr Woodhead of the overall performance of the system and of teachers."

Land reform is crofters' chance to buy



North Assynt crofter Alan MacCrae with his dogs surveying the estate, which is seen as the classic model for land buy-outs. John Voos

LAND REFORMERS and rammers were jubilant yesterday as the Government unveiled the most radical reforms to estate ownership and public access in Scotland since the Middle Ages.

The lairds of Scotland — where just 20 aristocratic families still own almost 10 per cent of the land — were put on notice that had management could end in compulsory purchase by the state. Crofters and communities will have more opportunities to buy the land their livelihoods depend upon and lairds will lose feudal powers enabling them to block devel-

BY STEPHEN GOODWIN
Scotland Correspondent

opments from vital jetties to cottage porches.

Donald Dewar, the Secretary of State for Scotland, said the reforms were not intended as "a raid" on landowners, most of whom conscientiously did their best. But there had to be increased diversity in the way land was used and owned. Land ownership is a potent issue, fuelled by a folk memory of the 18th-century Highland Clearances and neglect by absentee lairds.

Within the next few weeks, the 70 residents of the remote Knoydart peninsula on the west Highland coast hope to sign a lease for a rent of £1 plus a bottle of malt whisky to end decades of uncertainty under a series of landlords. It follows the peninsula's recent purchase by Sir Cameron Mackintosh, the neighbouring laird.

Mr Dewar described the package as a "dowry" for the new Scottish Parliament, to be elected in May.

The new regime could be in force by summer 2000. Around the same time Lottery money

should come on stream to help community buy-outs, with a possible £10m available over two years.

When estates come up for sale, communities will be given first option to buy at a price set by a government-appointed valuer. Lairds who try to evade the provision will risk compulsory purchase. Buy-out powers will be available for extreme cases of bad management.

At least 20 Highland communities are aiming to buy or secure a bigger stake in their land. The classic model for a "buy-out" was in 1993 when the

crofters of Assynt, in the far north-west of Scotland, acquired a 21,000-acre estate from a Swedish property company. The Duke of Buccleuch, Scotland's biggest private landlord and a staunch Tory, said he would not have voted against the reforms. "If you have a basket of apples and there are few rotten ones, it is just as well to throw them out," he said.

For people who just want to walk in the countryside is the promise of early legislation "for a right of responsible access to land" for recreation and passage. Deborah Orr, Review, page 5



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Female managers 'must be ruthless' to be successful

BUSINESS SCHOOLS that urge "managers for the new millennium" to make contact with their feminine side have got it all wrong, the British Psychological Society was told yesterday.

Senior executives of both sexes need to exhibit macho "kick-ass" characteristics to be successful, it was found in a study of 1,200 managers. Trivia Melamid, of Capita RAS, a recruitment consultancy, said the top female executives were quite as "masculine" as their male colleagues. "One

BY BARRIE CLEMENT

senior female manager told me that you have to be more like a man than a man and that you have to walk on dead bodies to get to the top." Dr Melamid told the annual occupational psychology conference of the British Psychological Society, meeting in Blackpool.

It was well-established that there was a clear-cut difference between male and female behaviour in the general population, Dr Melamid said: women were generally more caring

and sensitive and men were tough-minded. However, there was very little difference between male and female managers, he found.

While there was some evidence that many women were breaking through the "glass ceiling" and becoming managers, the trend had made little difference to the way executives behaved.

"It's politically correct to suggest that managers should be more caring and sharing and that they should listen to what people say and take it into ac-

count, but it doesn't seem to work," he told the seminar.

Over five years Dr Melamid interviewed managers in a wide range of organisations in the public and private sector — from education to the oil industry — and "macho" managerial qualities were seen to be needed in all of them.

His interviewees ranged from middle managers to chief executives and a quarter of them were women. Most of the successful female managers were seen to exhibit "masculine" characteristics quite nat-

urally. Many of them had no children.

"Those women who tried to get to the top of the tree by suppressing feminine qualities and developing the 'nasty' approach invariably suffered considerable stress, he said.

"Successful managers understood that they were not liked by their colleagues because they had to take tough decisions.

"And just as 'feminine' women experience difficulties, there was also no point in being a 1990s 'new man'."

Test reveals dark side of charming bosses

PSYCHOLOGISTS HAVE developed a test that can expose the hidden "dark side" of the personalities of senior managers.

While recruitment tests in the past have only measured "benign characteristics" such as sociability, the new procedure will attempt to uncover how a manager's greatest strengths can eventually lead to his or her downfall.

Based on research into managers who had "gone off the rails" the Hogan Development Survey aims to identify managers whose flawed social skills may have a disastrous impact on staff morale and ultimately company performance.

It teases out the information by asking potential recruits

BY BARRIE CLEMENT

about their attributes, according to Geoff Trickey of the Psychological Consultancy.

"If you want to find out potential problem areas, you look at people's strengths," he told the annual occupational psychology conference of the British Psychological Society.

Senior managers who are sceptical could develop cynicism, those who are careful might become over-cautious and those who are imaginative may slip into eccentricity.

The inventor of the test, the American psychologist Bob Hogan, cited President Bill Clinton as someone whose strength had become his weak-

ness. Mr Clinton was a vivacious man who always sought to talk to everyone in a room if that was possible. The weakness was that he was unable to concentrate on one issue for any length of time.

Professor Hogan also gave the spy Kim Philby as an example. He was a very charming man who used that talent to betray his country.

Mr Trickey conceded that many successful people had "extreme characteristics" and it was not the intention to ensure that only the bland were recruited. "The test allows a strength and therefore a potential weakness to be identified and training given to develop self-awareness."



Kim Philby — charming man who betrayed his country

Flu exposes chronic staff shortages

THE PRESSURE exerted on the NHS by the flu outbreak is being caused by problems dating back years, health managers said yesterday.

The real crisis is a staff shortage, caused by an erosion in pay and compounded by fewer beds. Sydney and Feking flu have only served to bring the crisis to the public's attention.

Britain is far from a flu epidemic. Stephen Thornton, chief executive of the NHS Confederation, representing health authorities and trusts, said they faced the problem of flu most years.

The unique factor now was

BY LOUISE JURY
AND DARIUS SANAI

the staff shortage. There is an estimated 8,000 shortfall of nurses, and a lack of paramedics, physiotherapists and speech therapists. "I can't remember a time in the last few years when it has been so difficult right across the country. That is the special ingredient," he said. "The Government has given us extra money, but in some parts of the country we can't spend it. We just can't recruit the staff."

Kingston Hospital, in Kingston upon Thames, is one

of many to have looked abroad. The first of nearly 50 nurses from the Philippines started there this week.

Britain is not producing enough nurses: last year the number of trainee places exceeded applicants. And there is a difficulty dating from the early 1990s, when the number of training places was halved in a recession.

A spokesman for Wolverhampton's New Cross Hospital said: "Staff have been working double shifts, 16 hours at a time throughout the Christmas and New Year period."

Many nurses have left the

profession because they can earn more elsewhere. "Nurses tell us that fair pay is the number one factor which would encourage them to stay in nursing," said Christine Hancock, general secretary of the Royal College of Nursing.

Bed occupancy rates were another factor in the crisis. Mr Thornton said: "Hospitals have been working increasingly to full capacity all year round. There is nothing more efficient than an empty bed, and occupancy rates are running at 90 per cent plus. But then you don't need very much of an increase in demand to create

real problems." Philip Monk, a public-health consultant in Leicestershire health authority, said there was a "very high level of consultation on influenza-like illnesses". Some really were flu, others were respiratory syncytial virus, which, for example, may make asthma worse and cause temperatures.

A third factor was the peak of the regular four-year cycle in the incidence of mycoplasma, a bug that causes chest infections. "A lot of people are very acutely ill," he said.

"There are a phenomenal number of people calling for the GP which means GPs are tak-

ing longer to get to them and people are going down to hospital, which isn't helping the situation. People are trying to find a short cut... when there are no short cuts to be had."

Douglas Fleming, of the Royal College of General Practitioners' infectious-diseases monitoring unit, said most calls were unnecessary, and accused the many "worried well" of selfishness.

Hugh Lamont, spokesman for the North West Region Ambulance Services, covering Manchester and Liverpool, said: "The system was overrun. The next stage for people was

to dial 999 and call an ambulance. The hospitals were acting as clearing houses for primary care and also dealing with the more serious cases coming in." At Walsall Manor Hospital, in the West Midlands, 278 emergency admissions were treated over a four-day period last week, an increase of 100 on the same week in the previous year.

All non-urgent operations in the Sandwell Health Authority area of the Black Country have been cancelled because of the outbreak. It has spread across the West Midlands: at a Wolverhampton hospital, 100 people

waiting for treatment were put on stand-by as doctors struggled to cope with demand from flu sufferers.

In South Wales, hospitals were under growing pressure because of the winter illness. Non-urgent surgery was cancelled at the 500-bed Llandough Hospital, near Cardiff, to provide extra beds for patients seriously ill with flu and chest infections. Almost 50 patients were admitted there as emergency cases on Monday.

The only part of England to have escaped is the South-west. Scotland has been relatively mildly affected.

Corpses stored in refrigerated lorry at hospital

BY CATHY COMERFORD

A HOSPITAL has hired a refrigerated lorry trailer as a temporary mortuary to cope with an unexpected surge in deaths caused by the flu outbreak over the holiday period.

The mobile cold storage unit, which stands at the back of the hospital, is providing 36 extra spaces for bodies that cannot be accommodated in the 80-space mortuary.

"People were dying all over Norfolk," said a spokesman for the Norfolk and Norwich Healthcare NHS Trust, Mark Langlands. "We had to do something." He said the hospital, which has the county's main mortuary, had found no vacancies at the other hospitals in Norfolk - Great Yarmouth, King's Lynn and Cromer.

The rise in the number of deaths had coincided with the Christmas holidays, which meant fewer funeral directors were arriving to collect bodies for burial and cremation.

A statement issued by the trust said it had "acted promptly to deal with a big increase in deaths" throughout Norfolk. "The public can be assured the deceased are treated with the utmost respect by our staff, who are working under extreme pressure at this time," the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital's chief executive, Malcolm Stamp, said in the statement.

"This is a short-term measure, but in the circumstances it is the right one. The pressure on beds has eased in the last few days but the situation does remain serious."

Watson-based Edmonds International Transport, which lends refrigerated food trailers to the hospital, has rented out the wagon for the next few weeks.

Its usual clientele include supermarkets needing deliveries or businesses dealing with



The refrigerated lorry outside the hospital in Norwich

wax or leather, which need to be kept at certain temperatures. It had never before been called on to provide a deep-freeze for bodies.

Philippa Edmonds, who runs the business with her husband, said yesterday: "I must admit my first reaction was to say no. Then I thought, 'Well we can't just leave them.'"

"In hindsight, perhaps I did the wrong thing. So long as people know that we don't use the same trailers to deliver to local supermarkets."

The hospital has fitted the 12-metre-long unit with shelving to accommodate the extra bodies.

"They were absolutely desperate," said Mrs Edmonds. "No one else would help. It was better than the alternative, which would have meant putting all the bodies in one room together."

"It does do the job while they don't have any room."

The unit is storing bodies just above freezing, at 2C - which is the same level as the hospital's mortuary. The lorry is parked next to the mortuary and a loading bay used for the hospital's laundry.

Mr Langlands said: "We are using the unit at the moment and we are coping at the moment, and we have no plans at

this time to bring in another. "It's a short-term measure, but in the circumstances it was the right one to take. We cannot put a timescale on it. The situation remains serious and we can't estimate when things will get back to normal."

The hospital is a rambling, redbrick Victorian building in the centre of Norwich, due to be replaced in two years by a modern facility on the edge of town.

The crisis in the mortuary has not spread to the rest of the hospital which, doctors said yesterday, was functioning normally. But a spokesman did confirm that the seriousness of the flu outbreak in the area had led to the cancellation of all routine surgery.

The spokesman added: "The Association for Influenza Monitoring and Surveillance has predicted that eight out of 10 homes in the Norfolk area will be hit by flu, colds or coughs in the coming weeks."

"Because of the high number of deaths we have had over the Christmas period we are effectively facing a major incident with this situation."

Members of the public visiting the deceased will not have to go into the lorry. There is a purpose-built viewing room at the hospital.



A patient on a trolley at St James University Hospital, Leeds

Simon Ryder

Casualty ward is 'bursting at seams'

BY JACK O'SULLIVAN

BRITAIN'S BIGGEST NHS trust criticised GPs last night for taking long Christmas and New Year breaks, which have caused a city hospital almost to "burst at the seams".

As patients waited on trolleys for admission yesterday to St James' University Hospital, Leeds, managers said they were furious with family doctors for closing their surgeries for four days over Christmas. They said that the GPs' deputising services had failed to cope, and as a result the 999 service was swamped with calls.

"Patients have bypassed GP services and come straight to us," said Bob Schofield, spokesman for St James', which merged recently with Leeds General Infirmary.

"That is why we have this crisis. It's not because of any flu epidemic because there is no flu epidemic. There is just a flu-like virus, which lays low the elderly and vulnerable but which younger, fitter people get over in three to four days."

"When all this is over, we will have to take a long hard look at what happened to primary care, to social services and to community services over the Christmas period."

"Why did so many people end up in hospital? We will have to learn the lessons."

"In 1997, because Christmas Day was on a Thursday, at least surgeries opened on the Saturday, but this year they did not open for four days. It meant that illness built up a head of steam, which became very difficult to deal with."

Mr Schofield said that over 6,000 people had attended the hospital's accident and emergency department between Christmas Eve and 3 January, a 50 per cent increase over the same period last year. However, only 1,500 had been admitted, meaning that most of the rest could have been seen by GPs, had they been available.

"We have only coped thanks to the heroic efforts of the staff. Some patients have suffered. The longest wait was by a patient two days ago who was on a trolley for 19 hours before we could find a bed."

The crisis, he said, had led to the cancellation of non-emergency surgery. Given that the outbreak of the flu-like virus is expected to continue for another week, the hospital is unlikely to return to normal until the end of the month.

Jason Warriner, a nurse with the trust, said: "It's been a very hard few days, the toughest ever, especially with problems recruiting nurses and illness among the staff we have. At this stage, the crisis is really wearing down morale."

Death toll in meningitis outbreak rises to nine

HEALTH EXPERTS are warning the public to watch out for the symptoms of meningitis, after two more deaths from the disease were confirmed yesterday. At least nine deaths from the disease have been reported over Christmas and the New Year, with most of the victims children or teenagers.

Experts said December and January typically see an increase in meningitis reports, and warned people to be alert for the early signs of the bug.

BY CATHY COMERFORD

Anne Marie Delrosa, campaign manager for the Meningitis Trust, said: "December or early January are the peak times for meningitis cases - you might see an increase from the average of 38 cases a week to around 70."

"It's important people are vigilant at this time of year. They need to contact a doctor as soon as symptoms appear."

The symptoms of meningitis

include severe headache, vomiting, joint and muscle pains and an aversion to bright light. A rash that does not disperse under pressure indicates meningococcal septicaemia, which is fatal in about 20 per cent of cases.

It was confirmed yesterday that a five-month-old boy and a 42-year-old woman, both from South Wales had become the disease's latest victims. Doctors said the baby, from Dinas Powis, near Cardiff, was taken

ill over Christmas and died in Cardiff's University Hospital from the serious meningococcal strain. The woman patient, of Taffs-well, near Cardiff, died in East Glamorgan Hospital.

Last night it was also reported that two children and a 29-year-old woman from the Wigan area of Greater Manchester had died from the disease. Public health officials were not making any link between the three deaths, even though the victims lived within

two miles of each other. Jack Williamson, three, was taken ill on Christmas Day and died at the Royal Manchester Children's hospital within 24 hours.

A second child from the same area, who has not been named, died the same weekend. On 2 January, Maria Edwards of Atherton, near Wigan, also fell ill and died.

A 15-year-old girl was critically ill in hospital last night after contracting the disease. The teenager - who has not yet

been named - was taken to Heartlands Hospital in Birmingham on Monday morning after suffering from a cough and a cold. Staff there immediately diagnosed meningococcal septicaemia but as there were no intensive care beds available the girl had to be flown to a hospital in Oxford. Within eight hours her symptoms developed into full-blown meningococcal septicaemia.

Last night the girl, from Solihull, was described as "critical

but stable" in the John Radcliffe Infirmary.

Dr Paul Turner, consultant public health physician at Solihull Health Authority, said last night: "At about 8.30am on Monday night she had mild symptoms of a cold. In less than eight hours this developed into full-blown meningococcal septicaemia."

The National Meningitis Trust's 24-hour helpline can be contacted on 0845 6000 800

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Police on trail of runaway foster family

THE COUPLE with the two blue-eyed girls in the train carriage next to the dining car seemed like any other family enjoying a day out. Noisy, excited, rather boisterous. They had not looked like a family on the run.

But police believe the family spotted on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway last Saturday were the Bramleys - missing for the past four months since the social services demanded the couple return their foster children.

The Rev Jack Cooper, 54, a volunteer ticket collector on the Moorland steam train, said last night: "I saw a piece on the television appealing for information about this family and the two little girls and I said to my wife, 'I know where they were on Saturday - they were on my train'. To be honest I only noticed them because the children had been misbehaving so much. They were clambering all over the seats and I had to speak to them and politely tell them to shut up."

Police believe Mr Cooper's sighting is the most reliable of many reported since the family disappeared from their home in Ramsey, Cambridgeshire,

BY ANDREW BUNCOMBE

113 days ago. On the strength of it they dispatched a team of officers yesterday to Pickering, North Yorkshire, where Mr Cooper said the family had left the train.

The officers spent yesterday in the small town carrying out door-to-door inquiries, visiting the many bed and breakfast establishments and distributing posters of the family. With the assistance of the North Yorkshire force, they have also been making inquiries in the Scarcroft Hill area of York where the family's G-registration blue Honda Concerto sedan was discovered abandoned close to the railway station on 30 December. "We believe there is a good chance the family is in the North Yorkshire area," a police spokeswoman said. "The sighting on the train - like all the others - is not corroborated, but the description that was given is very good."

Jeff and Jenny Bramley with their foster children - half-sisters Jade Bennett, five, and Hannah, three - were reported missing on September 14. That day the Bramleys had been due to hand back the children to



A family photograph of Jeff and Jenny Bramley with their foster daughters Jade (left) and Hannah Bennett

Cambridgeshire County Council's social services department which, after six months, had decided that the couple were unsuitable parents.

"In many ways they were too strict. It was not one thing in particular. It was a lot of little things. Things were not going as smoothly as they might," said a council spokesman, Bob Pearson. "Our social workers regularly spoke to the Bramleys to point out where they thought they were going wrong. In the end, a decision was taken."

A court ordered that Mr and Mrs Bramley should not be allowed to adopt the girls and that they should no longer be able to foster them. They were ordered to hand them back to the authorities at 10am on the day they were reported missing.

The social services staff are aware the Bramleys have attracted much public sympathy - a frugal, hard-working couple

fighting against bureaucracy being penalised for trying to instil a little discipline. Even staff within the department have been overheard voicing their support for the couple. A Cambridgeshire police spokeswoman said: "There is no doubt they love these little girls very much."

Mrs Bramley's brother, Dave Bodle, has spoken of her desperate struggle to keep the children. "It was clear that Jenny wanted children very much," he said. "They did everything that they could to keep Jade and Hannah. They appealed against the council's decision and started legal proceedings, but nothing worked."

But then, of course, there is the other side. The girls' natural mother, Jackie Bennett, who said she gave them up after suffering from depression, told one newspaper: "I made a huge mistake and I've been suffering

for it ever since. Mr and Mrs Bramley have been so selfish, so cruel. I only ever wanted my children to have a better life. I thought there was something wrong with the Bramleys on the one occasion I met them. I mentioned my concern to social services but was told they were okay and would love the kids."

"Only later was I told there were growing concerns. Now I just want Jade and Hannah home with me."

Last month, a High Court judge involved in civil proceedings concerning the children appealed for public help in tracing the family. Mrs Justice Hogg was concerned that the children's health and education needs were not being met.

Cambridgeshire social services also remains adamant its decision was correct. "These two little girls had a lot of special needs. They needed a lot of love and attention," said Mr

Pearson. "It might have been all right if the Bramleys were looking after children who were several years older."

The Bramleys did not leave Ramsey completely unprepared. After phoning his employer, the Royal Mail, to say he was sick, Mr Bramley withdrew about £5,000 from the couple's savings. But since they went missing the couple have not attempted to take out any more money and police believe that however frugally they have been living, their funds must now be running low.

Police are convinced Saturday's sighting is their best lead yet and there is a sense that the net may finally be closing on the runaway family. The train has not been lost on officers that they were tipped off about the Bramleys - penalised by the authorities for being too strict - only because the children had been misbehaving.

BRAMLEY FAMILY SIGHTINGS

15-30 September, 1998

Various sightings in north Norfolk including Hingham, Wroxham, Caistor.

2 January, 1999

Sighted on steam train between Gosport and Pickering.

30 December, 1998

Honda Concerto car found abandoned near York railway station.

1-2 November, 1998

Unconfirmed sightings in Dundalk and Portlaoise.

14 September, 1998

Reported missing from home at Ramsey, Cambridgeshire.

12 October, 1998

Reported sighting in Worthing.

100 miles

Unionist rift exposes Ulster tension

A MINOR Unionist party imploded in Belfast yesterday, giving yet another unmistakable sign that Unionism is in a volatile state, which may have ominous repercussions for the peace process.

The split within the UK Unionist Party, which held five of the Northern Ireland Assembly's 108 seats, means that the Unionist cause is now represented by six separate factions within the new institution. Both of the new fragments remain opposed to the Good Friday Agreement.

Opinions differ, however, on whether the development will

BY DAVID MCKITTRICK
Ireland Correspondent

in the end represent a net gain or a net loss for the pro-agreement forces that dominate the assembly. The agreement needs a stable and substantial section of Unionism to prop it up, but with such confusion and disarray in the ranks, uncertainty is the order.

In yesterday's split, four UK Unionist assembly members abandoned their leader, Robert McCartney, announcing they were forming themselves into the Northern Ireland Unionist Party. While Mr McCartney

seems to command the support of his party's grass roots outside the assembly, within the chamber itself he will become leader of a party without any other members.

The party has in recent times been closely aligned with the Rev Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party, campaigning vigorously for a "no" vote in last year's referendum on the Good Friday Agreement.

The split was accompanied by a fair amount of acrimony. Mr McCartney accused the four of an act of "political infamy", saying they had committed a fraud against the

electorate and challenging them to resign their seats and fight by-elections. He said the dissidents had little or no support and denied their claim that he was a despot intent on dragging them into a boycott of the assembly.

The dissidents said in a statement that they were opposed to Mr McCartney's "insistence that we blindly acquiesce in his exit strategy from the assembly".

They said that would weaken the anti-agreement forces, adding: "For elected members to withdraw from the assembly on the personal whim of a party

leader at a time of maximum crisis for the Union would be an act of gross political irresponsibility."

Mr McCartney is one of Northern Ireland's most familiar political figures, taking a prominent part in Unionist politics since the early 1980s. He is Westminster MP for North Down, having relinquished a profitable practice as one of Belfast's leading QCs to take up a full-time political career.

He left the Ulster Unionist Party after disputes in the 1980s, and more recently led his party out of the talks that led to the Good Friday Agreement.

Boy shot during game

A BOY of 13 was on a life-support machine last night after being shot in the head with an air-rifle while playing "soldiers" with friends.

Richard Bryant, of Tudor Green, Jaywick, near Clacton, Essex, was in a stable condition. A pellet is lodged in his skull. He was among a group playing near Clacton on Monday.

A 14-year-old boy arrested yesterday was being held in custody on suspicion of causing grievous bodily harm. Three other boys, aged 11 to 14, were being interviewed. Police recovered two air-rifles and a pistol that fires blanks.

BY JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

An Essex Police spokesman said: "It was a get-together of young friends which had tragic consequences." The boys were dressed in camouflage.

Police believe that Richard may have been up a tree when he was shot. After he collapsed an attempt was made to give him first aid before one of his friends ran home to call an ambulance.

The police were called in yesterday after a scan showed the pellet lodged in Richard's head. There was an entry wound

above the right ear. The pellet travelled across his skull and was wedged in the other side of his head.

He was shot at about 4pm but the emergency services were not called for some time and he arrived at hospital at 7.40pm. Police are trying to establish what caused the delay.

Doctors arranged a transfer to a specialist unit at the Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, because of the severity of the wound.

Richard's mother, Mandy, and his stepfather told police that they were unaware he had been playing with airguns.

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£1,115.61, £1,124.42, £1,133.23, £1,142.04, £1,150.85, £1,159.66, £1,168.47, £1,177.28, £1,186.09, £1,194.90, £1,203.71, £1,212.52, £1,221.33, £1,230.14, £1,238.95, £1,247.76, £1,256.57, £1,265.38, £1,274.19, £1,282.99, £1,291.80, £1,300.61, £1,309.42, £1,318.23, £1,327.04, £1,335.85, £1,344.66, £1,353.47, £1,362.28, £1,371.09, £1,379.90, £1,388.71, £1,397.52, £1,406.33, £1,415.14, £1,423.95, £1,432.76, £1,441.57, £1,450.38, £1,459.19, £1,467.99, £1,476.80, £1,485.61, £1,494.42, £1,503.23, £1,512.04, £1,520.85, £1,529.66, £1,538.47, £1,547.28, £1,556.09, £1,564.90, £1,573.71, £1,582.52, £1,591.33, £1,600.14, £1,608.95, £1,617.76, £1,626.57, £1,635.38, £1,644.19, £1,652.99, £1,661.80, £1,670.61, £1,679.42, £1,688.23, £1,697.04, £1,705.85, £1,714.66, £1,723.47, £1,732.28, £1,741.09, £1,749.90, £1,758.71, £1,767.52, £1,776.33, £1,785.14, £1,793.95, £1,802.76, £1,811.57, £1,820.38, £1,829.19, £1,837.99, £1,846.80, £1,855.61, £1,864.42, £1,873.23, £1,882.04, £1,890.85, £1,899.66, £1,908.47, 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The skeletons found at Lakenheath of an Anglo-Saxon chieftain and his horse. The grave also contained a large number of weapons BBC

Ancient warrior rides again after discovery

By KATE WATSON-SMYTH

THERE IS a military airbase in Suffolk, where the fighter planes roar overhead and hundreds of young men and women learn the skills of modern warfare. But underneath their feet lie the remains of ancient warriors who fought to defend their land in Anglo-Saxon times.

An archaeological dig at the US airbase, near Lakenheath, has unearthed an Anglo-Saxon cemetery containing the bones of dozens of soldiers and their families.

When the site was excavated, one grave stood out from the rest. Bigger than the others, it had been covered with a burial mound which, in a cemetery of unmarked graves, showed its occupant as someone of importance. Lying in the chalky earth, buried with all his weapons, were the skeleton of a soldier and the perfect remains of his horse. They were buried 1,400 years ago.

Julian Richards, an archaeologist who helped to research the findings for a BBC documentary, said the grave was one

of the most impressive examples of Anglo-Saxon burial grounds to be discovered.

"We knew that important men were sometimes buried with their horses but this is the first time we have found the bones in such good condition and with so many weapons as well," he said. "The horse was still wearing its bridle, which is also a unique find."

Mr Richards said the soldier was almost certainly the leader of the community. "We know he was important because his horse was sacrificed on his death. He was also buried with a large number of weapons including a spear, a sword and a knife although he did not die from battle wounds," he said.

"It could simply be that the weapons were included in the grave to signify his power."

The warrior was about 5ft 10in tall and died at the age of 30 but his remains did not reveal the cause of his death. He probably died from illness.

Further examination of the bones revealed that the warrior had suffered from some minor back problems. "These were quite common in Anglo-Saxon men and could have been caused by lifting heavy weights or falling off a horse," Mr Richards said.

The horse had been stung by a heavy blow to the head before its throat was cut. It was then buried wearing its battle regalia and with a bucket, perhaps containing water for the long journey to the next world, placed beside its head.

The soldier had been buried in a wooden coffin with his weapons laid on the top. There was a knife and some sheep bones, his food, and he was wearing his shield.

The remains are currently in storage at the Suffolk Archaeological Unit but will go on display in a local museum later this year.

■ 'Meet the Ancestors' will be shown on BBC2 tomorrow at 9pm. A BBC book accompanies the series.

Mentally ill 'guilty of fewer murders'

BY LOUISE JURY

THE NUMBER of murders committed by the mentally ill has fallen in the past 40 years despite public fears to the contrary, leading psychiatrists said yesterday.

An analysis of Home Office statistics appeared to challenge the basis of the Government's plans to lock away more people with schizophrenia and other mental illnesses.

After the case of double murderer Michael Stone, who had a personality disorder, Frank Dobson, the Secretary of State for Health, said caring for the mentally ill in the community had failed to deal effectively with the most severe cases. He proposed a tougher approach. Stone was given life sentences last October at Maidstone Crown Court for the killing of mother and daughter Lin and Megan Russell in Kent. He also left for dead Josie Russell, then aged nine.

Professors Pamela Taylor and John Gunn of the Institute of Psychiatry in London said there was no proof that care in the community had failed. According to their analysis of official statistics the number of murders committed by the mentally ill had halved from 121 in 1979 to 60 in 1995, the last year of available figures. They had fallen by 3 per cent a year since 1957.

Professor Gunn said drunkenness and drugs were a bigger factor than schizophrenia in killings. The professors appealed for people with mental illness not to be stigmatised as most posed no risk to others.

Professor Taylor said: "A homicide is an appalling tragedy for all directly concerned, but single cases, how-

ever shocking and publicised, do not constitute evidence for failure of a national system of care, nor for far-reaching changes in legislation and service delivery.

"Confining people with a mental illness to hospital to save 40 or so lives would be analogous to abolishing private motoring to prevent the 4,000 or so road deaths."

In a paper published yesterday in the *British Journal of Psychiatry*, the professors said tackling substance misuse or personality disorder was "the most important challenge for the development of mental health services".

Professor Robert Kendall, president of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, said it was nonsensical to conclude there would be no homicides if psychiatry services and social services were working properly.

Professors Taylor and Gunn criticised organisations such as the Zito Trust, set up by Jayne Zito after her husband was murdered by a schizophrenic, to influence mental health policy.

Michael Howlett, of the Zito Trust, said the tragedy of 40 to 50 murders a year did require far-reaching reforms in mental health services, although the trust had never said the problem was increasing.

"The Zito Trust supports the Government's mental health strategy and looks forward to new legislation and improved services so that those who suffer from mental disorders of all kinds can live safely in the community, knowing they will get help as and when they need it," he added.

IN BRIEF

Mother-to-be's jailing condemned

PRISON REFORMERS attacked the decision to jail a woman who is due to give birth. The Howard League for Penal Reform said the four-month sentence, given at Liverpool Crown Court, is inappropriate. Sharon Williams, 32, from Liverpool, was jailed on Monday after pleading guilty to possessing amphetamines with intent to supply.

Girl, 12, bailed on murder charge

A 12-YEAR-OLD girl accused of murdering a 16-month-old child while baby-sitting was remanded on bail yesterday until 16 February by Manchester Youth Court. The girl is charged with murdering Molly Adams, who died in hospital last month two days after being admitted suffering from a fractured skull and brain injury.

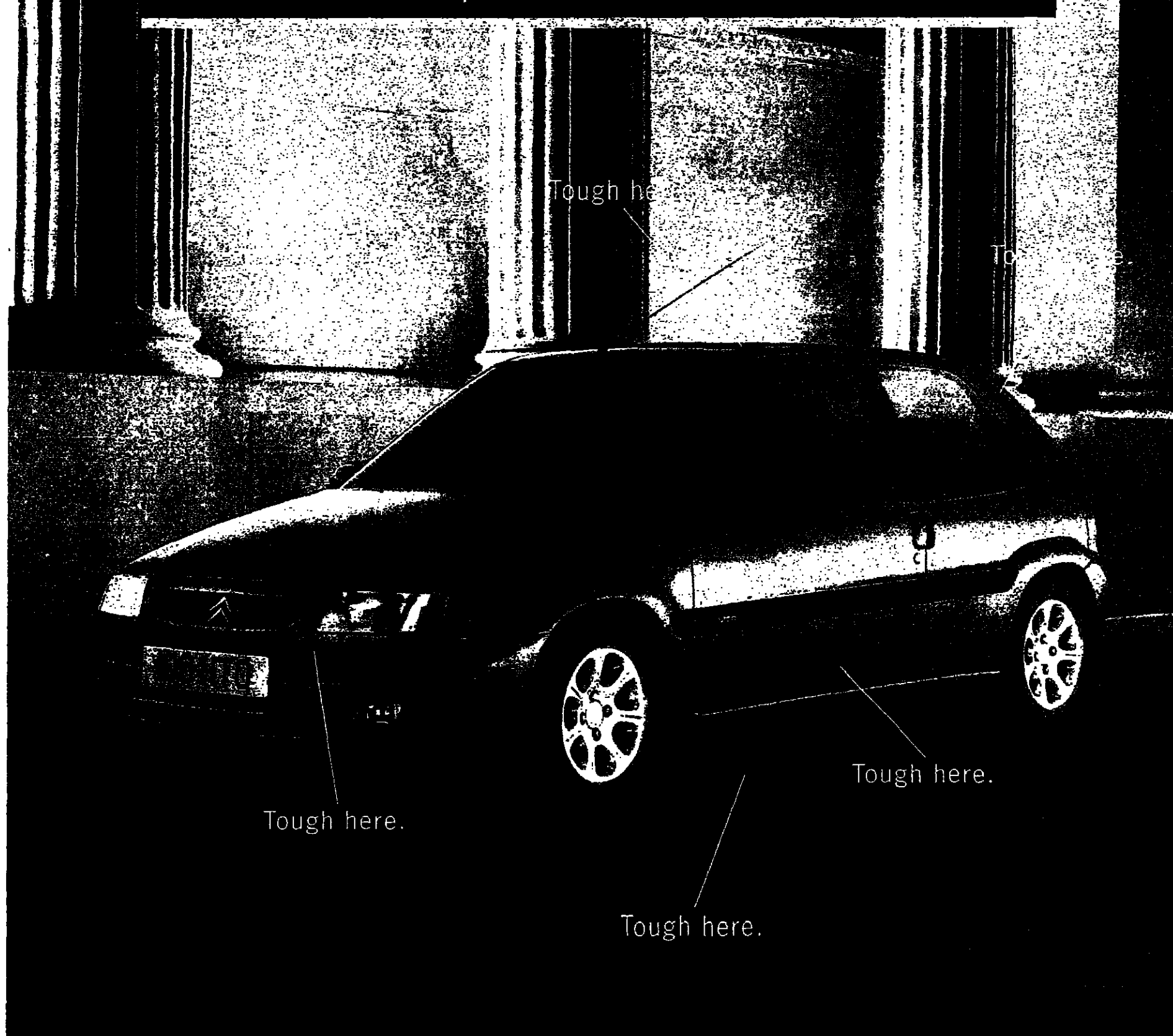
Dirty water costs supplier £14,800

ANGLIAN WATER was fined £10,000 with £4,800 costs at Witham magistrates' court in Essex for giving customers discoloured water. The company admitted supplying water unfit for human consumption. The prosecution was brought after brownish coloured water was supplied to 11,000 people in Halstead, Essex, in 1997.

£1m spent on blood donor adverts

A £1M NATIONAL advertising campaign was launched yesterday to recruit blood donors. The hard-hitting adverts follow recent statistics which showed that less than 6 per cent of the eligible population gives blood.

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Single currency: Analysts claim that lower prices are on the way – but the high street is slow on the uptake

Hard job for euro bargain hunters

BUY YOUR French car in Germany and your chart-topping British CD in Italy. Cross-Channel day-trippers have compared prices for years but retailers are only slowly making plans to mark goods in euros.

The single currency will become the bargain hunter's best friend even before it is in our pockets. But retailers have been given three years' grace before all items are required to be marked in euros.

There is confusion among retailers and a lack of interest among shoppers. "We shall not be marking items in euros in the near future," said a spokesman for the Stockmann department store in Helsinki. "We shall mark all our goods in euros and the Finnish mark soon," said his colleague.

At the Karstadt department store in Bonn, the shop manager, Breit Graf, said: "Since Saturday we've printed the totals on our receipts in deutsch-

BY ALEX DUVAL SMITH,
DIANE COYLE
AND PHILIP THORNTON

marks and euros. We have printed some 50,000 receipts but few customers have remarked on it. We are disappointed." At Galeries Lafayette in Paris, receipts are also in euros and francs but a spokeswoman said: "We have no date for dual pricing. It will happen gradually."

Even though the euro will not be in consumers' pockets until 1 January 2002 – with old currencies being withdrawn in participating countries on 30 June of that year – it is already clear the currency will lead to greater competition. Indeed, the European Union is running a "rounding down" campaign, to encourage retailers to cut prices when they relabel. Thus DM1.99 will become 0.99 euros rather than 1.02 euros.

A survey by *The Independent* of the cost of 10 items in

five European countries – including Britain, which is not in euroland – shows enormous price disparities. Were we to have euros in our pockets today – thus avoiding punitive exchange rates and bank commission – Italy would be the cheapest place for a Big Mac and the most expensive for a jar

of Nescafé. Britain would be the place to buy the iMac but not the Tomb Raider 3 computer game. The cheapest Levi 501s would be in Germany and the dearest George Michael CD in France. Overall, January sales notwithstanding, Germany is cheapest for most of the items. It is certainly the place to buy

a Peugeot 306. The basic three-door model is 6,568 euros (£4,668) cheaper than in Britain. But British motor industry analysts believe car prices will not necessarily come down to the levels of the cheapest countries. Rather, they predict prices will converge in the middle. Because Britain is exempt

from European competition rules, car manufacturers are able to set up exclusive relationships with UK dealers. This provision – known as the block exemption – was criticised by a powerful cross-party group of MPs, which last month found UK consumers paid too much for their cars.

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, which has blamed exchange rates for high prices in Britain, believes pricing in euros will put the focus on the levels of purchase

tax on cars, which varies from 15 per cent in Germany to 200 per cent in Denmark.

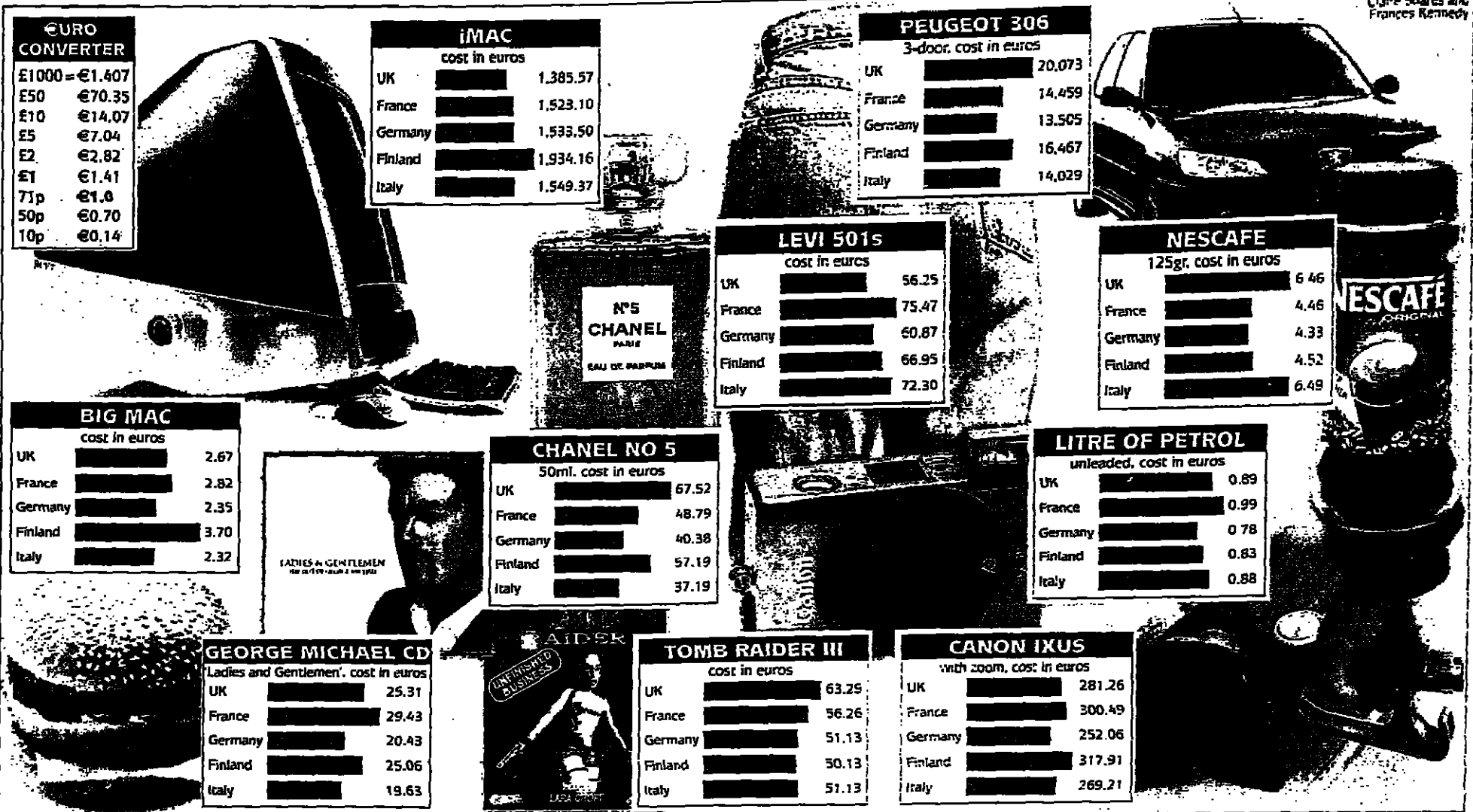
On European-wide goods such as soft drinks, toothpaste and batteries – which often have multi-lingual packaging already – consumer watchdogs believe prices will converge.

Other prices will most probably remain disparate because of cultural differences. Nescafé is adjusted to suit national palates and washing powder is frothier in northern Europe than in the south. Some con-

sumers, therefore, might prefer always to buy locally.

The Brussels-based European Consumers' Organisation called this week for businesses to speed up efforts towards dual pricing.

The organisation – which recently found car radios to be up to 36 per cent cheaper in Rome than in London – also warns that provision must be made for consumer protection as cross-border purchases, in person or by Internet, become more common.

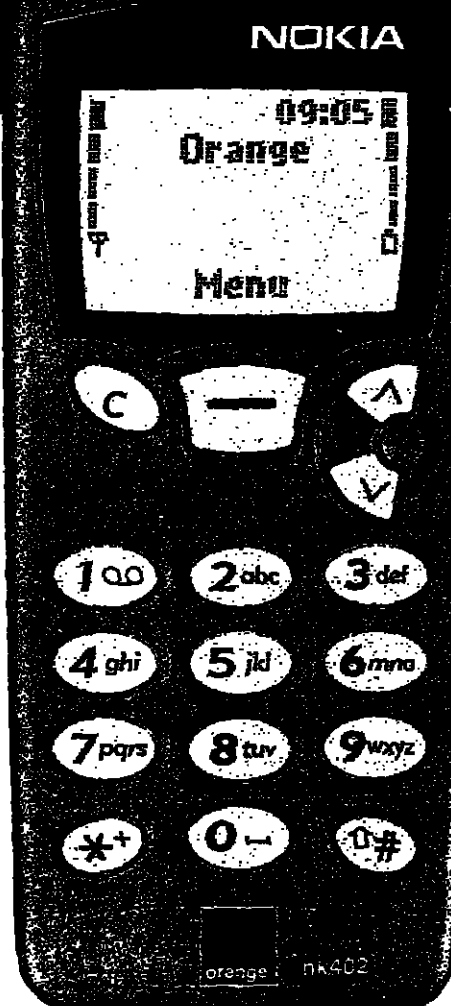


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New kid in town too hot to handle

BY JOHN DAVISON

AMJAD, THE smiling man in the Bureau de Change, laughed out loud when asked if he was selling euro travellers' cheques. "No, no. Come back in 2002," he said.

Given that the bureau is called Eurochange and that it is sited on the busiest shopping street in Britain, it seems that not everyone in this continental outpost has embraced the euro programme. Other attempts to complete our euro shopping list on Oxford Street were variously met with furrowed brows, nervous smiles and much head shaking before eventual – partial – success.

Even the man at the American Express bureau on Regent Street seemed momentarily thrown. Yes, he did have euro travellers' cheques, but we were the first people to have asked for any. Other curious members of staff gathered to stare at the exotic pieces of paper as the two 50-euro cheques were issued.

And that was the easy bit. Starting small, we tried to buy a copy of the latest George Michael CD from HMV. The sales girl's confident demeanour visibly fell away when one of the cheques was proffered. She ran for the phone.

"Err... we are going to take them but the computers aren't running yet," she said. "You could use them at one of our airport branches."

As Heathrow seemed a bit of a hike we decided to approach the Division One music shop. "What am I supposed to do with



The single currency is a foreign currency in Britain

this? Roll it up and smoke it?" said the owner, Johnny Chandler, when presented with a euro cheque. He didn't say "groovy" but he did, however, check with his bank what trading with euros would entail and discovered several pitfalls for the small retailer.

He would be charged £4 to process a cheque for anything below 300 euros (25 on more than that) and, without a euro account, it would be treated as a foreign currency.

It was time to go back to Amjad. Would he change our euro travellers' cheques for sterling? A call to head office revealed that this, too, was a no-no for Eurochange.

The prize for pragmatism went to Hussein Mohammed, a director of A&M Electronics on Tottenham Court Road.

"At the end of the day, we are here to take money, and I don't care what denomination you pay in," he said. "We already

take all kinds of currencies – from Norwegian krone to Italian lira. This is now a fact of life. Either you live with it or be out of it."

He even quoted us a "special discount" euro price for a widescreen television (£1,400 euros). But as the 100 euros would make little impact there, it was time to move on. Again.

John Lewis was more than happy to take the cheques at a rate arranged through its in-house bureau de change. Yet as this would involve paying commission, it hardly seemed in the spirit of a "single" currency.

It was Virgin Megastore that was able to conduct a real euro transaction, but then only after we returned the following day so that its technicians could complete the necessary computer alterations.

A triumph of sorts. But perhaps Amjad's idea of waiting another three years was the best advice of the day.

'Eurolande' challenges a Mickey Mouse name

BY JOHN LICHFIELD
in Paris

case, euroland sounds like a poor imitation of Disneyland. Should everyone in euroland wear Mickey Mouse ears in the shape of the new euro symbol?

Henri Lavenir de Buffon, head of an organisation trying to promote French as Europe's single language, wants to go a step further. He suggests that eurolande should be imposed as the official title of the euro zone, for all 11 nationalities and all nine languages taking part in the first wave of the single currency. That, he says, would be a "protection against cheap Americanisation and treason against Europe".

The august and style-setting newspaper *Le Monde* seems to have opted for euroland. One of its readers suggested, however, that the European Union should think again and go for a much less English-sounding name such as Euralie. After all, the British are not even in the euro zone.

The new currency has caused a similar linguistic headache in Russia. In both French and German, the euro has been made a masculine word. But, in the absence of an official ruling in Russian, the country's newspapers have made it bisexual, swinging between masculine and feminine and occasionally straying into neuter.



Cambodian soldiers packing the Taiwanese waste, the arrival of which caused rioting and an exodus by villagers

Popperfoto/Reuters

Waste fiasco piles woe on Cambodia

WHAT MORE can go wrong in a country that has survived genocide and civil war? The answer in Cambodia was the arrival of 3,000 tons of toxic waste from Taiwan.

The Cambodian government, led by Hun Sen, has never been shy about making money fast, and has not shown itself to be fussy about how it is made. However, the scheme to allow a Taiwanese company, Formosa Plastics Group, to dump waste near the coastal city of Sihanoukville has badly misfired. At the beginning of the week the powerful Taiwanese petrochemical company said it would take back the waste and send it to another country, probably the United States, where facilities exist for its safe disposal.

There has been trouble since the waste was discreetly shipped to Cambodia in November. In Sihanoukville riots erupted in which one person was killed as protesters sacked offices of staff blamed for allowing the material into the country. Another four people died as panic broke out and 10,000 residents fled the town, seeking to get away from the waste dumping ground.

In the docks where the waste was unloaded a worker died after cleaning the hold of the ship carrying the material and another five fell ill and were taken to hospital. Villagers scavenging among the

BY STEPHEN VINES

waste and recovering plastic bags containing compressed ash from an incinerator found they were taking home material that poisoned them. The villagers are dirt-poor and survive on supplies from the World Food Programme. When they saw trucks arriving they thought they were being sent shelter and bedding materials.

Formosa Plastics, which could not dump the waste in its own backyard because of the fear of protests, initially insisted that the material was not toxic. Later it admitted that some of it might slightly exceed safety standards.

However, Georg Peterson, the World Health Organisation's representative in Cambodia, said tests had found "extremely high" levels of inorganic mercury in the waste. Although it carries the threat of blood poisoning, tests done by the organisation have not shown poisoning symptoms in the blood and urine of port workers and soldiers who handled the waste.

It is therefore unclear how villagers were affected by the waste and it is not really known how toxic the material is. The government sealed off the village where the bulk of the waste was dumped and refused access to independent observers.

Access was also denied to a

team led by Tseng Cheng-nung, a Taiwanese legislator who has close relations with Cambodia. The team included Formosa Plastics Group officials who were trying to collect samples for testing. Cambodian officials said they could not be allowed to enter the waste dump because they failed to wear protective clothing.

Now the waste is being put into sealed barrels. Lee Chih-tsun, a senior Formosa Plastics official, said: "We plan to ship the waste out of Cambodia to either the United States or Europe, where disposal technology is sophisticated".

But it is not clear when the waste can be moved and negotiations are still continuing between the company and the Cambodian government over shipping arrangements. Wang Yung-ching, the powerful patriarch who chairs Formosa Plastics, has sent a letter of apology to the Cambodian government.

It seems that this is the end of another of Cambodia's get-rich-quick schemes. That leaves drug-smuggling and illegal logging - which is wrecking the environment - as alternatives which have yet to be curbed.

In the area around Sihanoukville the residents have received no compensation and those suffering from contamination are not being treated.

IN BRIEF

US safety warning in Egypt

THE UNITED STATES embassy in Cairo warned Americans to take care in Egypt because of threats from "extremist elements". The embassy said it had "received reliable information that extremist elements may be planning imminent, unspecified attacks against US interests in Egypt".

Woman decapitated on subway

A MAN was charged with second-degree murder after a woman was decapitated by a train in New York on Sunday. Andrew Goldstein, 29, who has a history of mental illness, was accused of pushing Kendra Webdale, 32 on the subway. He was ordered to be held for psychiatric examination.

Row over German citizenship law

A LEADER of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, Michel Friedman, accused the Christian Democrats of recklessness by launching petitions against a proposed law that would allow immigrants to hold a German passport without giving up citizenship of their mother country.

Salesman guilty of Le Pen taunt

A PARIS man was given a one-month suspended jail sentence for selling T-shirts showing the French far-right leader Jean-Marie Le Pen with three bullets in his head. Georges Vignal was found guilty of provocation that could lead to an attack on a person. He was also ordered to pay damages of 1 franc.

Gates custard pie throwers fined

TWO PEOPLE who threw custard pies at Bill Gates, the Microsoft chairman, in Brussels last February were fined by a Belgian court. The two, who were not identified, were fined by the Police Court. It was reported that they had each received fines of 3,000 Belgian francs (€54).

Birthday knickers reveal all

A ROMANIAN man thought he'd done the right thing over the New Year holiday when he gave his wife lacy black underwear for her 35th birthday.

But his wife, identified only as Victoria in the Romanian newspaper publishing the story, became suspicious when she discovered the gift was three sizes too small. Then, at her birthday party, Victoria overheard another woman saying she had received, as a gift from her lover, underwear that was three sizes too big.

Victoria's husband told her the shop had packed the wrong size of knickers for him but, unsatisfied, she visited the boutique in their home town of Galati, 125km north-east of Bucharest, where a salesman told her a man had bought two sets of lacy underwear.

On Monday, Victoria went to see her husband's lover and proposed that they swapped the underwear, which they did. Then she went to court and filed for divorce. (AP)

Serbs deny new claim of mass grave

THE DISCOVERY of an alleged mass grave of Albanians in Kosovo provoked a fierce war of words between Serbia and the West yesterday, threatening the work of Western charities working in the province.

The grave near Urosevac, 20 miles south of the province's capital, Pristina, is reported to contain the bodies of about a dozen Albanians killed in the Serbian government's offensive against pro-independence fighters in the spring.

Mass graves are a burning topic in Kosovo and Serbia, as Serbia's reported atrocities against Kosovo's mostly Albanian population last year prompted the West to threaten Belgrade with air strikes. Belgrade was forced to withdraw most of its troops.

Sandy Blyth, a spokesman for the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, said: "The information is on an apparent, alleged mass grave of 11 women and children who were apparently killed in the summer."

Serbia's deputy Prime Minister, Vojislav Seselj, denounced the monitors working for the OSCE for investigating "non-

BY MARCUS TANNER

existent Albanian mass graves around Urosevac". Mr Seselj said: "Western powers, Nato and Albanian terrorist bands are conducting a joint action in Kosovo."

At the same time, Belgrade threatened the work of a Western medical charity, accusing it of supplying arms to Kosovo's Albanian guerrillas. Vukasin Andric, Serbia's health minister for Kosovo, said the Paris-based group Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Frontiers) "has abused their mission as they have been caught trying to smuggle in and conceal arms for ethnic Albanian terrorists". The charity's head in Yugoslavia, Tim Boucher, denied the charge, which he said came out of the blue.

The Serbian authorities have repeatedly complained that the presence in Kosovo of OSCE monitors, in place to observe a US-brokered truce between Belgrade and the Albanians, has merely allowed Albanian guerrillas to regroup and strengthen their control over Kosovo.

Another two Albanians were

shot dead yesterday at a petrol station in Vitina, 25 south-east of Pristina, although it was not clear whether they were "collaborators" murdered by the guerrillas of the Kosovo Liberation Army or victims of Serb revenge squads.

Belgrade's fear that the province is continuing to slip out of its control will have been strengthened by the first broadcasts of a KLA-run radio station - Radio Free Kosovo, "Kosova e Lire" - in "liberated" territory in the province and the first news items from a KLA press agency - Kosova Press - published yesterday.

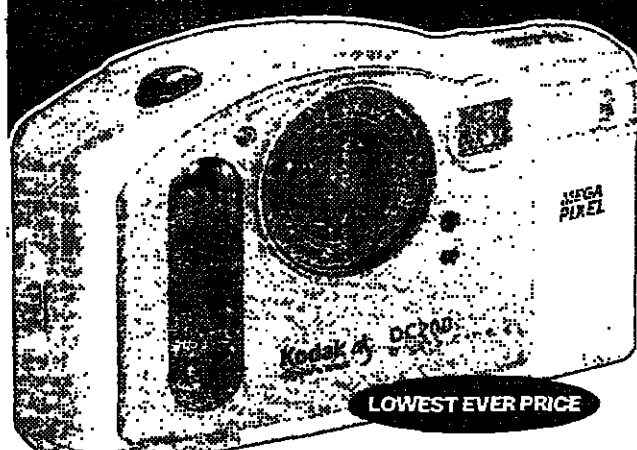
The failure of the American-brokered truce to lead to substantive talks on Kosovo's constitutional status in or outside Serbia makes it certain that the province will be plunged back into more fighting in the spring once the thaw starts.

In Washington, James Rubin, the US State Department spokesman, said yesterday: "There is not that much time left for a negotiated solution before we face the prospect of renewed and very dangerous conflict this spring."

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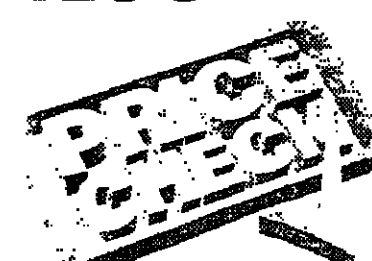


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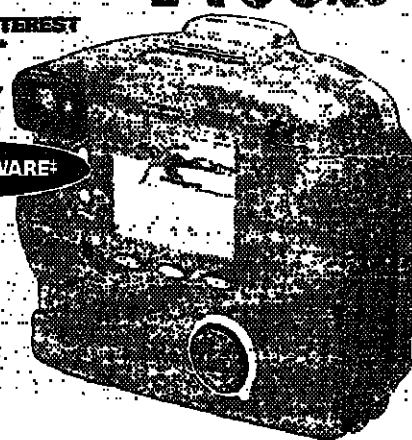
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BUSINESS

Vodafone confirms £60bn merger talks with US rival

VODAFONE, the mobile phone supplier, yesterday confirmed it is in talks with US rival AirTouch about a merger which would create an industry giant with more than 20 million customers and a market value of over £60bn.

BY PETER THAL LARSEN
with Bell Atlantic, the acquisitive US regional telecoms group. Discussions are believed to be going on with both groups.

senior management positions, have yet to be decided. The company is believed to have retained Goldman Sachs, the US investment bank, as adviser.

Vodafone might only offer for AirTouch's overseas businesses, leaving Bell Atlantic to take control of the US operations. But the UK company is understood not to have had any discussions with Bell Atlantic about a joint bid.

analyst John Tysse, referring to the companies' policy of investing in new mobile phone operators around the world. "There is enormous scope for cost benefits by being in multiple worldwide markets."

Europe. However, as they were frequently members of rival consortia, the fit between operations is almost perfect. The only overlap is in Germany, where they have stakes in rival networks. However, they are partners in Sweden and Egypt.

BRIEFING

Royal London raises payouts
ROYAL LONDON, the insurance company, opened the with-profits bonus season yesterday by announcing that it is increasing payouts on its 25-year endowment policies by an average of 5 per cent.

The company said a man aged 29, paying £50 a month into a 25-year endowment, would see the total payout increase from £118,874 to £124,835. Over 10 years, payouts increase by 1 per cent and by 0.5 per cent for 20-year policies. But 15-year maturity values will drop by 3 per cent compared to last year.

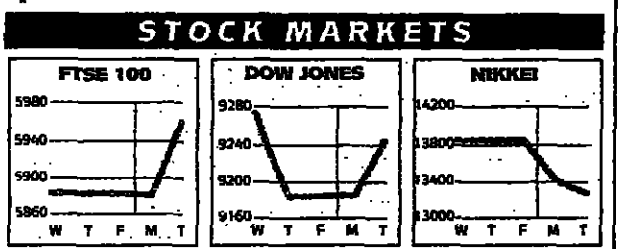
Pharmacia shares tumble
SHARES IN Pharmacia & Upjohn, the Swedish-US drug group, tumbled 6 per cent yesterday after the Stockholm government announced the sale of its stake in the group.

Dealers said that the fall in the price was sparked by fears that the disposal would flood the market with P&U's shares. The long-awaited disposal of the state's 7 per cent holding, valued at around \$2bn, marks the final privatisation of P&U, formed in 1995 from the merger of Sweden's Pharmacia and Upjohn of the US.

Lars Reide, the Swedish trade and industry secretary, said that it was "the appropriate time" to sell the shares. The stock has risen 20 per cent over the past six months.

Axa rings changes at Sun Life
SUN LIFE & PROVINCIAL yesterday said it was replacing Gilles Avenel, its finance director, with Julian Roberts, a former director of Aon, the US insurance broker. The listed insurer, majority-owned by the French insurance giant Axa, said Mr Avenel was returning to Axa from a three-year secondment. Andy Homer becomes chief executive of Axa Insurance, a general insurance subsidiary of Sun Life & Provincial.

Hertz Europe axes UK jobs
HERTZ EUROPE, a subsidiary of the world's largest car hire group, yesterday announced plans to restructure its UK business which will lead to dozens of redundancies. The company said it would merge the back office operations of its UK and European operations in a bid to cut costs.



Driving forward to the Big Six

News Analysis: Car making is again awash with merger talk. Is Daimler-Chrysler the deal that unleashes a flood of global consolidation?

AS THE Detroit Motor Show got into full swing yesterday, the world car industry was again awash with merger speculation.

Ford of the US was said to be planning takeovers of Honda of Japan and Germany's BMW, both of which denied they were in talks. A day earlier, Japan's Nissan poured scorn on reports that it was preparing to link up with Ford.

Meanwhile Robert Eaton, co-chairman of Daimler-Chrysler, itself the product of \$90bn merger last year, fanned the flames by predicting that two European car manufacturers would join forces in the next 90 days.

Everyone in the car industry seems to think that consolidation is inevitable. Most also believe it will be a good thing. But guessing who will jump into bed with whom, and on what terms, is a less exact science.

In the past decade not a single major car maker - and very few minor ones - has escaped being confidently linked to takeover deals. Perm virtually any pair from a long list. Apart from this week's flurry, the more recent crop of rumours has had Volvo merging with Fiat or Ford, or perhaps Renault, and BMW merging with Fiat - or is it Volkswagen?

But what corporate activity there has been has tended to take place at the fringes of the industry. Thus Fiat has swallowed Lancia and Ferrari, Volkswagen has taken Seat, Skoda and Rolls-Royce under its wing. BMW has acquired Rover, Ford now owns Jaguar and General Motors has assumed control of Saab of Sweden.

But the much vaunted mega-mergers - the deals that would carve the world car market up among a handful of major players - have failed to materialise. Until Daimler-Chrysler, that is.

At a stroke, the takeover created a group with revenues of \$130bn (£78bn) and unit sales of 4 million cars and light commercial vehicles a year, propelling Daimler-Chrysler into fifth place in the world automotive league, above the likes of Fiat, Nissan, Honda and Peugeot-Citroën. Suddenly, Sir Alex Trotman's vision of the

BY MICHAEL HARRISON

"Big Six" seemed within reach once more.

The idea that within a few short years there may only be half a dozen car makers which matter - two in North America, two in Asia and two in Europe - may sound extreme. But the economic argument for rationalisation is persuasive. The world car industry is generally reckoned to have 40 per cent surplus manufacturing capacity. The vast bulk of this is in Europe, where the industry is estimated to have the capacity to build 22 million vehicles compared with the 16 million produced last year.

According to a recent report from consultants KPMG, the world's car makers plan to build 15 million more cars over the next three years than most forecasters believe there is demand for. James Bentley, the chairman of the firm's European automotive practice in Birmingham, says: "There are too many assembly factories in Europe and there is too much capacity, although there will still be waiting lists for the sought-after models. Even more capacity is being brought on stream. Something has to happen, and the high-cost, low-productivity sites will inevitably lose out."

The striking thing about DaimlerChrysler, however, is that the merger involved no plant closures and no job losses. In terms of geographic coverage and product range, the deal was as near a perfect fit as could be achieved, with Daimler's focus on Europe and the luxury end of the car market and Chrysler's concentration on the US and the light truck and utility vehicle market.

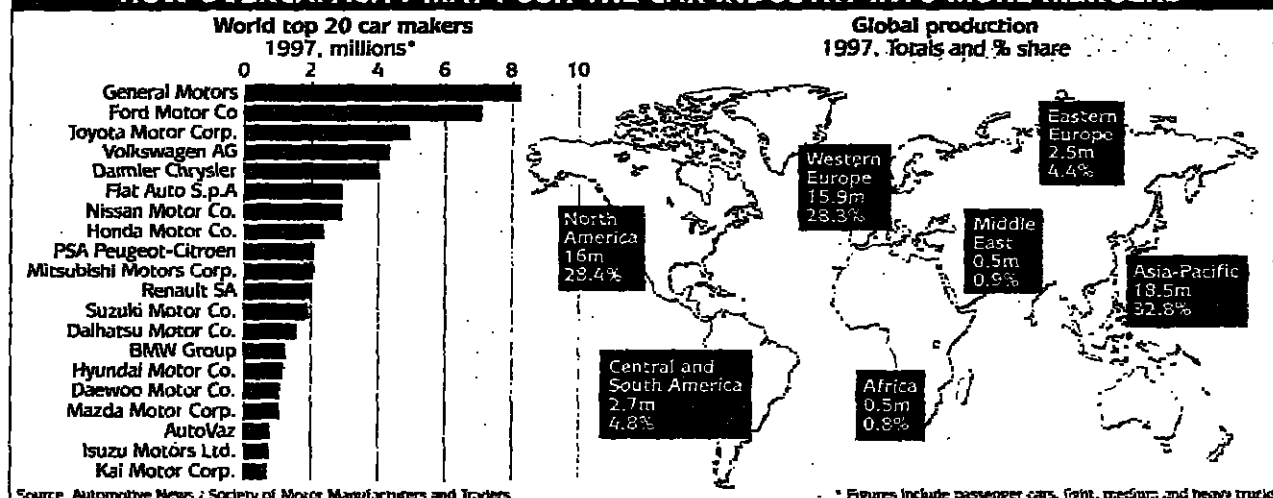
Even so, DaimlerChrysler still expects to achieve savings worth \$3bn in three years through better procurement, more efficient use of capacity and the sharing of technology and best working practices. A takeover of BMW by either General Motors or Ford would be a complementary fit in many respects. So, too, would an acquisition of Volvo, although GM's ownership of the other Swedish car maker, Saab, could



Ford chairman Bill Ford unveils the Focus at the Detroit show: the US car maker has been linked with bids for BMW and Honda

EPA

HOW OVERCAPACITY MAY PUSH THE CAR INDUSTRY INTO MORE MERGERS



be an obstacle. It is not obvious, however, that the Daimler family, which controls BMW, is interested in selling out, while Volvo's institutional shareholders would surely hold out for a high price.

If Ford were to acquire BMW, the combined group would be equal in size to GM, the world's biggest car maker.

There would be a product and capacity overlap in the UK, where Ford would end up with six production sites because of BMW's ownership of Rover. At least half of these would probably go. But the carnage in terms of job losses and plant closures, and the subsequent political uproar, would be infinitely greater if two of Europe's

volume car makers were to merge.

For this reason, some observers are cautious about the likelihood of European consolidation. John Lawson, automotive analyst with Salomon Smith Barney, says: "Everyone can see that the structure of the industry is not right, but at the same time it isn't in the inter-

ests of any two manufacturers to solve the problem for their competitors."

He thinks, however, that Asia is a different proposition. Car makers there are in a much weaker position now than two years ago, and the two most vulnerable to an approach from Ford or GM are Nissan and Mitsubishi. "If their cash flow from

the US is good and Europe remains stable, then this may be a good time to recycle some funds by expanding into Asia," adds Mr Lawson.

But then again, both Nissan and Mitsubishi have poison pills built into their balance sheets in the shape of enormous debts - in Nissan's case these stand at \$36bn. "Unless the banks take a haircut, that makes them quite indigestible at the moment," says Mr Lawson.

So will the great rumour mill produce any real corporate activity this year? Jim Donaldson, president of Ford of Europe, says 1999 will be the year of restructuring. Mr Eaton, too, is sticking by his prediction of a European tie-up within the next three months.

But, as Mr Lawson observes: "There is sometimes an element of mischief-making in what the senior managements of car companies say. They have to be taken with a certain pinch of salt."

If Mr Eaton is right, we will not have to wait long to find out.

IN BRIEF

Meyer in £56m timber sale

MEYER INTERNATIONAL yesterday announced the sale of its Pont Meyer Import and Merchant divisions, which distribute timber and building materials to William Pont, part of HAL Investments for £56m in cash.

Meyer retains its Dutch tiles, kitchens and bathroom business, which has been transferred to its specialist products division. The businesses sold made an operating profit of £4m in the year to the end of March 1998 but the disposal will trigger an exceptional loss of £13m. The shares shed 11.5p to 335p.

Telecoms jobs go

MORE THAN 200 workers at Telecom Manufacturing in Airdrie, Lanarkshire have lost their jobs following the company's collapse. Unions at the plant are demanding a DTT inquiry into the job losses. They claim the business is owed £5m by a sister company. The factory makes components for the telecoms sector. A wind-up order was granted before Christmas.

Top pay rises

EXECUTIVE PAY continues to rise above inflation but the differential between chief executives and other directors continued to narrow last year, reflecting the continuing demand for high quality executives, according to an annual report prepared by actuaries Watson Wyatt Worldwide. Chief executives received median increases of 9.2 per cent in their total cash remuneration, with other directors achieving a 13.5 per cent rise. Half of chief executives polled received a bonus of less than 25 per cent on their base salary and only 20 per cent received a bonus of more than 60 per cent.

Euclidian up 22%

EUCLIDIAN, the insurance group, increased pretax profits by 22 per cent to £1.7m in the six months to September, mainly because of increased company investments and the inclusion of a full year of trading from Euclidian Underwriting which operates Syndicate 1243 at Lloyd's. The shares fell by 2p to 119.5p.

Colographic sold

COLOGRAPHIC, a direct mail printer that was the subject of a £27m management buy-out three years ago with the backing of NatWest Equity partners, has been sold. The buyer is New York quoted Big Flower Holdings. The price paid has not been disclosed. Colographic made revenues of £33m last year. It is Big Flower's second UK acquisition in less than a year.

HSBC Korean bid

HSBC, the UK-based bank which last week lost out in the bidding for Korea First Bank, has been invited to tender for SeoulBank, the second of the two Korean banks been privatised as part of the IMF-backed deregulation programme. HSBC lost out last week after insisting that the government cut its stake to no more than 20 per cent. A rival US-backed consortium was prepared to settle for 51 per cent leaving the government with 49 per cent.

Abbot and ProSafe in £500m tie-up to create drilling giant

THE RAPIDLY-consolidating oil industry witnessed another merger yesterday when Abbot Group, an oil contractor, announced a £500m tie-up with its Norwegian rival ProSafe to form the world's largest operator of drilling platforms.

The all-share, no-premium merger of equals will create a dominant player in the North Sea oil market with combined sales of over £300m and more than 3,000 employees.

The two firms said the deal would lead to very few redundancies among Abbot's Aberdeen-based 1,800 employees and ProSafe's 1,200 staff as there was little overlap between the two companies.

The merged entity will op-

BY FRANCESCO GUERRERA

erate 26 offshore oil platforms on behalf of large oil corporations in the UK and Norwegian waters of the North Sea.

Shares in both companies soared on news of the deal as industry analysts said that the merger would boost Abbot and ProSafe's earnings. Abbot rose 13.5p to 192.5p, while ProSafe rocketed 58 per cent to 88.5p Norwegian krona on the Oslo stock exchange.

City analysts said the merger had been partly driven by the two companies' need to increase their critical mass following a string of mergers among their main customers and a collapse in oil prices.

Over the past few months, BP has linked up with Amoco of the US in a £90bn deal. Exxon and Mobil announced a £46bn merger, and Total and Petrofina combined in an £8.1bn tie-up.

Industry experts said the mergers had increased the majors' buying power and service needs. "Bigger customers want bigger suppliers," one City analyst said.

Shares in the new company, to be called Abbot, will be split equally between Abbot and ProSafe's investors.

Alasdair Locke, Abbot's chairman and largest shareholder, will become the executive chairman of the enlarged group. Reidar Lund, ProSafe's

chief executive officer, is set to remain in the same post in the new entity, the two companies said.

Michael Salter, Abbot's chief operating officer, said the merger would give the company the financial firepower to expand in lucrative oil markets in the Caspian Sea and Western Africa.

Mr Salter said that the combined group would use its position in the offshore platforms markets to expand in other areas of the oil services industry.

"The merger will give us added strength. The objective is to use that strength to provide a wide range of oil services around the world," he said.

Travelex restructures with backing from 3i

TRAVELEX, the specialist chain of airport currency shops, is being restructured with the help of a management buy-out backed by 3i, the venture capitalists.

The two existing institutional backers, Abbey National, which has had a 33 per cent stake since 1996 and now offers its own travel money service, and Investec, which bought the 21 per cent stake originally held by Hambros, are both selling out.

They will be replaced by 3i, which is financing an increase in the stake held by the existing management, led by the founder and chief executive Lloyd Dorfman, from 46 per cent to 67 per cent. In addition,

BY CLIFFORD GERMAN

3i will hold directly a 33 per cent stake.

The company, which began with a single office in 1976 and expects to make a profit of £7m this year before interest and tax, will eventually be floated but there will be no pressure to do so quickly, a 3i spokesman said.

Travelex maintains that the timing of the deal has nothing to do with the start of trading in the euro. National currencies will continue to circulate into 2002 and their eventual replacement by euros will mainly affect demand from tourists.

Tourists mostly buy their currency from high street banks and travel agents, 65 per cent of

whose turnover comes from customers travelling to destinations in Euroland.

Travelex specialises in airport sites and international locations where it services long-distance and business travellers, whose demand for foreign currency is expected to grow at least in line with the overall volume of travel.

It also has numerous outlets in the US and Australia. Only 20 per cent of its business depends on short-haul tourists in Europe. As the pattern of demand for currencies changes, Travelex expects to develop partnership deals with high street outlets to provide their customers with currency as they pass through airports.

Expect things to get worse before they get better

NOVEMBER'S SHARP bounce in retail sales - up by 0.8 per cent in the month, when most had expected a further fall - was the first upside surprise on economic activity for many months.

Of course, the usual caveats about not reading too much into one month's data apply, but the figures do suggest the risks for the economy in 1999 might be a little more evenly balanced than the overwhelming gloom that dominates much commentary might suggest. A glance at forecasters' expectations suggests the same. The consensus among private sector economists is that the economy will expand by somewhere between half a per cent and 1 per cent in 1999.

This is certainly slow enough to encompass the possibility of a technical recession - two consecutive quarters of negative GDP growth. And growth this slow would probably result in unemployment rising by around half a million. But for the peri-



ADAM COLE

Beyond the next few months, there are reasons for relative optimism

od of healthy growth seen since the early 1990s to end with a slowdown of this magnitude - rather than a sizeable contraction in output before a pick-up back towards trend growth in 2000 - would signal a significant break with the tradition of the last several decades. Typically, downturns in the

UK have been characterised by output falling cumulatively by around 5 per cent. Why should things be different this time? Primarily, it comes down to a question of balance. At the height of the economic boom of the late 1980s, the UK corporate sector was in financial deficit - the excess of investment over saving - to the tune of 5 per cent of GDP.

The current account - the UK's financial position with the rest of the world - was in deficit to almost the same degree. Estimates of the output gap - the level of output relative to what is sustainable without accelerating inflation - suggest it had become positive to the tune of about 6 per cent of GDP. Against this background, a collapse in output had become necessary to get the economy back on track.

At the peak of this economic cycle, things look very different. The current account is in surplus, the corporate sector in only marginal deficit, and most estimates suggest output is less

than 1 per cent above trend. The economy simply does not need the sort of slowdown that has typically ended upswings.

Unfortunately, of course, what the economy needs is not always what it gets. And the forward-looking indicators have pointed to a sharper slowdown than even the most pessimistic interpretation of the economy's growth potential would imply is required. But beyond the next few months, there are further reasons for relative optimism.

First, policy is being eased at a far earlier stage of the economic cycle than has been the case in the UK's history. Second, the economy looks well placed to respond positively to low interest rates. Base rates started to fall while growth was merely slowing this time. In the early 1990s, output was already falling substantially before a clear peak in base rates was in place.

The response of the economy to lower base rates depends crucially on the health of house-

hold finances. In this respect, things look strikingly different compared to both the UK's history and to other developed economies, most notably the US. Abstracting from recent volatility, the UK saving ratio - savings as a proportion of personal income - stands at around 7 per cent. This compares to a slightly negative saving ratio in the US, although a small part of the difference may be explained by different definitions.

At the equivalent point to now in the last cycle, the UK saving ratio had fallen to around 5 per cent. This suggests UK households have some room to absorb slower income growth by saving less as base rates fall.

The housing market - the key transmission mechanism for base rates to the real economy - also suggests some room for optimism. The recent recovery in house prices has done little more than match the growth in average earnings, leaving house prices - outside central London

at least - still looking relatively cheap by historical standards.

For the UK as a whole, average house prices are around four-times annual average income. This compares to around six times at the peak of the last boom in the late 1980s. A further recovery in house prices does not, therefore, need an out-of-control boom, but rather a continued recovery towards "normal" house price valuations relative to income.

So, the economy is in good financial shape and activity and asset prices are not booming to the degree they have at the peak of previous cycles; all pointing to relatively modest slowdown in growth. Yet confidence, particularly business confidence, remains depressed and short-term lead indicators suggest output may well fall in the early months of 1999. What might prompt an upturn?

The answer, of course, is further falls in base rates. And base rates should fall much fur-

ther from here. December's half a per cent rate cut and, more importantly, the minutes of the meeting released two weeks later, suggest the policy-making process has changed significantly in recent months. Up to the last quarter per cent move in October, the majority of Monetary Policy Committee members clearly felt the level of interest rates was - give or take a quarter of a per cent - right.

Each monthly meeting was a matter of assessing the month's economic news and determining whether it argued for a marginal tightening or loosening of policy. But December saw a significant shift in this respect with the MPC apparently contemplating the possibility that the absolute stance of policy may simply be too tight, as real interest rates are too high. Strictly speaking, an accurate measure of real interest rates takes the current level of base rates and subtracts the level of inflation expectations. Given

the difficulties in measuring inflation expectations, however, we generally assume that current inflation is a reasonable proxy for where inflation is expected to be in future.

As the chart shows, on this basis, base rates have only just moved to the right side of neutral by historical standards. Add in the strength of sterling and there is little doubt that policy overall remains tight. With the MPC apparently coming to the same conclusion, expect base rates to fall rapidly from here with a trough of 5 per cent or less in place by the summer.

All-in-all, expect news on the economy to get worse before it gets better in 1999. But with the MPC acting quickly to avert a sharper slowdown than is necessary, 1999 should, by the UK's standards, be a relatively soft landing.

Adam Cole is UK economist at HSBC Economics and Investment Strategy.

Other

INDEPENDENT
Wednesday 6 January 1999
THE INDEPENDENT
Wednesday 6 January 1999

Bid talk brings 6,000 in reach

IT WAS back to basics yesterday, with takeover activity - real and rumoured - driving the market higher.


Defence, drugs, insurance and, once again, telecoms dominated the day's proceedings, helping Footsie put on 78.8 points to 5,982.2, its best level since shortly after the July 1998 peak of 6,179.

Vodafone's confirmation of its interest in the AirTouch Communications of the US sent another exhilarating surge through the telephone wires as speculators hunted for the next possible deal. In heavy trading Vodafone charged 61.5p to 1,110.5p, a peak. Orange rose 33.5p to 828p and BT 45.5p to 988.5p.

Telewest Communications, with Warburg Dillon Read offering support, was the best-performing Footsie constituent, up 19.5p to 205p. Cable & Wireless gained 22.5p to 779p and the seemingly irrepressible Colt Telecom managed an 84p jump to 1,037p.

Suggestions of a counter

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

linking with top US groups such as Lockheed Martin.

On the insurance pitch it was GRE, the old Guardian Royal Exchange, attracting attention. Once again it was said that a deal was imminent, with many expecting an announcement today. The popular guess was a combined swoop by Axa of France and Prudential Corporation, with a few bits and pieces being picked up by, possibly, Independent Insurance. A price north of 375p is the popular guess; but GRE shares firmed only 2p to 346p.

LucasVarity, the aerospace and car parts group, was another on the takeover production line. The shares gained 7.5p to 215.25p on reports, which the Anglo-US group significantly failed to deny, that it was in talks with two US groups. Any such deal would allow LV to hop the AT-

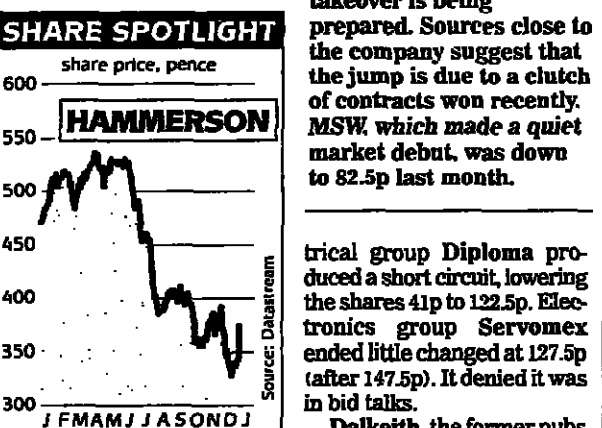
BRITISH REGIONAL Air Lines, which has suffered a disastrous time since floating in the summer at 150p a share, could at last be attracting institutional support.

The shares, down to as low as 33p in October, gained altitude by 6.5p to 60p with, it is thought, stockbroker Albert E Sharp lifting this year's profits forecast 25 per cent to 16m. In 1997 British Regional, now capitalised at only £38.7m, produced profits of £4.2m.

bid for Zeneca put drug shares on a high: Zeneca climbed 80p to 2,774p, and Glaxo Wellcome, everybody's favourite to barge into the proposed deal with Sweden's Astra, gained 140p to 2,233p. SmithKline Beecham, another possible interventionist, put on 33.5p to 887p.

General Electric Co, said to be deep in discussions with a range of defence groups, rose 22p to 535.5p, with Cazenove thought to be advocating a 600p target. The long-running defence power game has already thrown up an array of permutations with, at one time or another, most of the various groups married off to each other.

Current suggestions include GEC's Marconi arm merging with British Aerospace, 14p higher at 519p, although there is also speculation about a BAE deal with DaimlerChrysler. Speculation continues about GEC



lantic, a move institutional investors blocked last year.

BP Amoco was again the most traded share in the wake of the giant merger. With a 57.8 million recorded turnover, the price fell 8.5p to 916p.

Underperforming properties encouraged the euphoria, with CSFB, longtime bears of the sector, thought to have become more positive. ABN Amro was another believed to be more bullish about bricks and mortar. It was enough to lift Land Securities 29.5p to 800p and Hammerson 18.5p to 372p. Chelsfield gained 15.5p to 270p.

Although much of the action was concentrated on the

Investment: Long-awaited slump in software demand may have arrived

SAP warning sends shock waves through IT sector

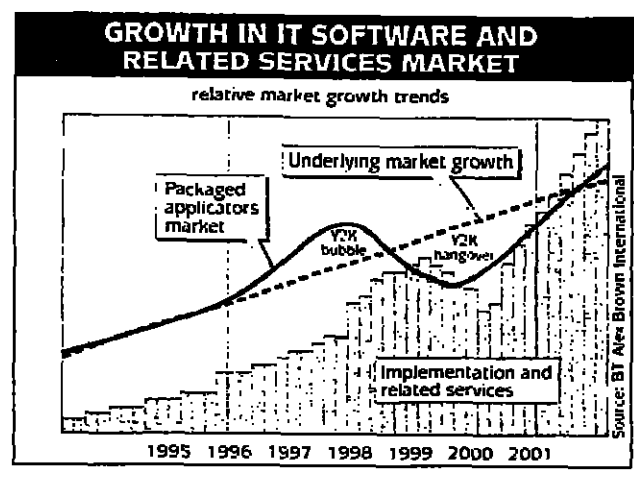
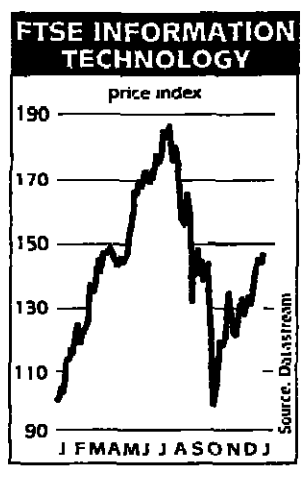
BY PETER THAL LARSEN

SAP the German software group, yesterday issued a profit warning that wiped 15 per cent off its market value and sent shock waves through the European information technology industry.

SAP world leader in the supply of enterprise resource planning software that helps clients link different functions in an organisation, said pre-tax profits for the year to December had risen by about 15 per cent - half the level of growth expected by the market. SAP predicted sales growth of 20 to 25 per cent in the current year compared to hopes of up to 40 per cent.

The warning raised fears that the long-awaited downturn in demand for software and IT services has come earlier than expected. Many analysts have cautioned that a slowdown at SAP could lead investors to dump IT stocks.

However, the fallout from the warning was limited as SAP blamed the shortfall wholly on slower demand in Germany and the economic crisis in Russia. The two factors combined to wipe some DM240m (£85m) off annual revenues.



SAP stressed that growth in Europe and the US, where revenues rose by 40 per cent and 50 per cent respectively, had been "extraordinarily strong".

In the UK, some stocks suffered. Shares in FT Group, the outsourcing specialist, fell 8.5p to 320p, while rival ITNET's shares dropped 7.5p to 471p. Larger computer services companies such as Logica and Sema were also marked down.

However, shares in UK companies specialising in implementing SAP packages, such as Diagonal and Druid, were unaffected.

Banking software group Misys and Sage, the accounting software supplier, saw their shares rise.

"Obviously sentiment towards technology stocks in general will be affected by this," said Derek Brown, an analyst at BT Alex Brown, the investment bank. "But there are no companies in the UK that are directly comparable to SAP".

The factor that most sets SAP apart from others is its dependence on revenue from software licences, which can be highly volatile. "They don't have much forward visibility," Mr

panies make final preparations for the millennium date change. The need to bring computer systems up to date before the end of 1999 has been one factor driving the phenomenal growth in demand for SAP's software.

"SAP is more or less a one product company, and the millennium bug is one of the main problems. The bug had a positive impact on results in 1996, 1997 and the first half of 1998. But now no one is investing in SAP software," said Jochen Klusmann, an analyst at Bank Julius Baer.

Although companies which depend on licence revenues will be hit hardest by the slowdown, other IT players will feel the effects. Shares in companies that supply IT contractors, such as MSB, have suffered in recent months because of fears demand will suddenly dry up.

With many IT stocks still trading on very high multiples of expected earnings, the question is whether investors have been sufficiently prepared for a sudden slowdown in growth towards the end of the year. A number of industry experts feel investors are overly optimistic and could suffer a few nasty shocks this year.

Hays delivering the goods in France

BY NIGEL COPE

HAYS, the business services group run by Ronnie Frost, continued its strategy of adding small, bolt-on acquisitions to its portfolio yesterday with the £19.5m purchase of France Partner, a leading player in the express parcel delivery sector.

The deal comes after a similar one secured last month when Hays paid £40m for Colirail, which has 10 per cent of the next-day delivery market in France and occupies a strong niche position in the insurance market.

Combining the two businesses will lead to economies of

scale, says Mr Frost, and will give Hays around 20 per cent of the next-day delivery market.

France Partners made profits of £1.2m last year on sales of £29.5m, but Hays estimates that it can improve the company's margins from 4 per cent to between 8 and 10 per cent.

The deal adds to the flurry of acquisitions undertaken by Hays in the past few months. In addition to the Colirail and France Partner purchases, Hays also paid £40m for Axis Resources, a specialist in payroll

systems, in December, and in October it picked up Sifino, a French computer staff operation.

The acquisitions are part of the group's strategy to expand on three fronts: distribution, which provides distribution services for retailers such as Waitrose, Tesco and M&S; commercial, which operates document delivery services for the legal sector and others; and personnel, focusing particularly on the professions such as accountancy.

This three-legged structure has served Hays well. The company has surged into the FTSE 100 and is now valued at £4.2bn.

However, the shares are off their 566p peak of last April, with critics worried about the group's cyclical exposure. This explains the stock's discount to rivals such as Rentokil Initial.

Mr Frost admits that the personnel division is seeing signs of a slowdown: growth is now thought to be in the mid-teens against last year's 30 to 40 per cent growth. But he maintains that there are still no signs of recession. The plan is to continue seeking smaller deals, particularly on the Con-

tinued, which now accounts for half the group's business.

According to Charles Pick at Pannure Gordon, yesterday's acquisition is likely to leave Hays with rationalisation costs in the first two years before making a contribution in year three.

But on Pannure's full-year forecast of £233m, the shares - up 37.5p to 496.5p yesterday - trade on a forward multiple of 25. This is a premium to the market, but the discount to Rentokil combined with Hays' impressive record has led Pannure to suggest a 12-month target price of 580p.

UK plc fails to make the grade

PEOPLE AND BUSINESS
BY JOHN WILLCOCK

UK PLC has a lot of ground to make up if the 11 January edition of *BusinessWeek* magazine is anything to go by. The American business bible polled its 145 writers in 25 countries for a list of "The Top 25 Executives of the Year". Not a single Brit made the list.

The closest we got was under another list of "Executives to Watch" - and that was Marjorie Scardino, the Texan-born chief executive of Pearson. Even then, while the magazine allowed that Ms Scardino had "lived the media group up", it issued a stern warning: "the hard part - digesting the recent \$4.6bn purchase of two Simon & Schuster units."

"The deal leaves Pearson's CEO facing hefty debt as Britain enters a downturn," it turned to another American business magazine, *Forbes*, with trepidation. Its "A-plus list" of the best 27 companies on the planet, however, contained slightly less dismal news for the UK.

It included two British companies, Vodafone and Rentokil Initial, as well as the Anglo-Dutch Unilever and Anglo-American BP Amoco.

TALKING OF Ms Scardino, the media boss has poached Courtlauds Textiles's 36-year-old finance director, Pippa Wicks, to be managing director of Pearson's newly created Management Education business.

Ms Wicks, considered by admirers as an "up and coming woman in the City", worked at the high-powered strategic consultancy Bain & Company before she joined Courtlauds in 1993.

"I went in for a cup of tea and stayed for seven years," Ms Wicks recalls. "I did not expect to be made finance director." She is not an accountant.

Ms Scardino convinced her that the market for distance learning is about to enjoy explosive, global growth and that Pearson is well placed to benefit. Ms Wicks will report directly to her.

Ms Wicks has two other passions at the moment. "I'm a fanatic for travelling to cut-off places," she says, having just returned from Bhutan. And she is teaching herself the flute.



Marjorie Scardino: chief executive to watch

The former head of Otief was referring to the Docklands Light Railway (DLR), the office development's only fixed link with central London. Mr Cruickshank and his aide then spent a miserable five minutes shivering on the windswept DLR platform, until his patience snapped. "Oh so it, let's get a taxi."

The Government's struggle to get the public to switch from private to public transport looks set to be a long and weary one.

KPMG's two senior receivers, Tony Thompson and Roger Oldfield, had a sweet-smelling Christmas. They completed the sale of the name and most of the brands of Yardley, that quintessentially English perfume company that went bust last year.

In a series of separate deals, the perfumed duo sold the Yardley name to Wella, the German toiletries company, and the women's brands to Fine Fragrances & Cosmetics of the UK. These include Tweed, Panache, Lace, White Satin and Chique.

Mr Oldfield says he is in talks to sell Yardley's men's brands, English Blazer and Gold. "There's a huge market overseas for these brands," he enthuses.

Yardley makes a fragrant contrast to another, rather more mundane receivership now being completed by Mr Oldfield: that of Rosehaugh, the property development company formerly owned by Godfrey Bradman, which Mr Bradman used to build the Broadgate Centre in the City.

"SOME PEOPLE doze off in meetings (and who can blame them sometimes?)," says Jo Gardiner in her book *"Flying Start"*, a guide to surviving the first day of your first proper job.

The book, to be published on 19 January by the Industrial Society, includes a list of characters to watch out for in meetings, including "the nodder", writes Ms Gardiner, "who spends most of the time in meetings looking interested/ concerned/ involved and nodding a lot, apparently in support of what others are saying". She adds, however: "They rarely make any original contribution."

My favourite is "the sleeper". She writes: "It may not seem particularly helpful and it's not to be recommended, but they could really feel the need to sleep (if they've got children or have been ill, for example)."

Wolves bid period extended

THE OFFER period for Wolverhampton & Dudley's £262m hostile bid for rival brewer Marston, Thompson & Evershad has been extended after Wolves received acceptances from just 0.89 per cent of the share capital.

The deadline has been extended until 1pm on 26 January. The next key date is Friday which as Day 39 under Takeover Panel rules - is the last day for Marston's final defence document.

BY NIGEL COPE
Associate City Editor

Marston shares closed 2p higher at 289.5p, compared to the offer price of 282p. Wolves shares closed a penny higher at 427.5p.

Marston has been fighting a rear-guard action against the Wolves bid. It received a setback just before Christmas when Greene King, the Suffolk brewer which had been tipped as a possible White Knight, struck a

deal with Wolves under which it will buy a batch of over 100 pubs if the bid proves successful.

This follows an unsuccessful attempt by Marston to raise £137m through the securitisation of its tenanted pub estate. The move was blocked by shareholders who wanted more time to consider the Wolves bid.

Marston wants to use the proceeds from the sale to concentrate on adding to its Pitcher & Piano chain of managed bars.

FOREIGN EXCHANGE RATES									
Country	Sterling	Spot	1 month	3 months	Dollar	Spot	1 month	3 months	Euro
UK	1.0000				0.6095	0.6041	0.6050	0.7098	
Australia	2.6641	2.6619	2.6588		1.6078	1.6081	1.6084	1.8911	
Austria	13.7651	13.7635	13.7618		1.1699	1.1694	1.1694	12.7403	
Belgium	36.831	36.831	36.831		34.298	34.293	34.293	40.340	
Canada	2.5190	2.5182	2.5175		1.5302	1.5200	1.5199	1.7880	
Denmark	10.4693	10.4673	10.4653		6.3370	6.3170	6.3170	1.0906	
Euro	1.4088	1.4051	1.3990		1.1761	1.1761	1.1761	1.0000	
Finland	8.241	8.241	8.241		5.0552	5.0475	5.0320	5.9457	
France	8.241	8.241	8.241		5.0552	5.0475	5.0320	5.9457	
Germany	2.7554	2.7542	2.7536		1.6629	1.6629	1.6629	1.6629	
Greece	456.85	456.85	456.85		7.7572	7.7572	7.7572	7.7572	
Hong Kong	12.836	12.836	12.836		7.7468	7.7468	7.7468	7.7468	
Ireland	1.1095	1.1066	1.1018		0.6696	0.6696	0.6696	0.6696	
Italy	272.7	272.7	272.7		16.645	16.645	16.645	16.645	
Japan	166.46	166.46	166.46		11.34	11.34	11.34	11.34	
Malaysia	6.2964	6.2965	6.2968		3.8000	3.8000	3.8000	3.8000	
Mexico	16.226	16.226	16.226		9.7925	9.7925	9.7925	9.7925	
Netherlands	3.1046	3.1046	3.1046		1.8757	1.8757	1.8757	1.8757	
New Zealand	3.0869	3.0869	3.0869		0.5369	0.5369	0.5369	0.5369	
Norway	12.346	12.346	12.346		7.4718	7.4718	7.4718	7.4718	
Portugal	202.44	202.44	202.44		7.004	7.004	7.004	7.004	
Saudi Arabia	6.2191	6.2191	6.2191		3.7509	3.7509	3.7509	3.7509	
Singapore	2.7688	2.7688	2.7688		1.6710	1.6683	1.6685	1.6685	
South Africa	9.5233	9.5233	9.5233		1.4125	1.4125	1.4125	1.4125	
Spain	234.40	234.40	234.40		7.9880	7.9880	7.9880	7.9880	
Sweden	13.236	13.236	13.236		1.3652	1.3652	1.3652	1.3652	
Switzerland	2.2699	2.2699	2.2699		1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	
US	1.6570				1.3599	1.3599	1.3599	1.3599	

INTEREST RATES									
UK	5.25%	Discount	5.25%	Repo (w/e)	Japan	5.00%	Discount	5.00%	0.50%
Base					Discount				
European Central Bank					US				
O/N Marginal 2.5%					Prime				
O/N Facility 2.75%					Discount				
Repo					Discount				
Canada					Swiss				
Prime					Swiss				

BOND YIELDS									
Country	3 mth	6 mth	1 yr	2 yr	3 yr	5 yr	10 yr	15 yr	20 yr
Australia	4.65	0.00	4.61	0.05	4.67	0.08	4.81	0.09	5.07
Belgium	3.22	0.00	3.14	0.00	3.06	0.03	3.37	0.01	4.02
Canada	4.61	0.01	4.80	0.02	4.77	0.01	4.93	0.01	5.01
France	3.21	0.01	3.18	0.01	3.04	0.03	3.34	0.01	3.79
Germany	3.21	0.01	3.03	0.01	3.06	0.00	3.34	0.01	3.84
Italy	3.21	0.01	3.18	0.01	3.04	0.03	3.34	0.01	3.79
Japan	2.49	0.00	2.17	0.00	3.16	0.02	3.39	0.02	3.94
UK	1.39	0.04	1.68	0.06	1.52	0.01	1.83	0.03	2.31
US	5.60	0.10	5.61	0.00	4.94	0.02	5.04	0.05	4.33

MONEY MARKET RATES									
Overnight	1 week	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year	Overnight	1 week	1 month	3 months
Base						Base			
LIBOR						LIBOR			
5.90	5.80	5.70	5.60	5.50	5.40	5.90	5.80	5.70	5.60
5.00	6.00	6.25	6.25	6.18	5.88	5.00	6.00	6.25	6.25
6.19	6.31	6.13	6.25	6.19	6.25	6.19	6.31	6.13	6.25

LIFFE FINANCIAL FUTURES									
Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est. floor	Open	Contract	Settlement	High	Low
Long Gilt	Mar-99	119.25	119.82	119.10	128157.00	102557.00			
5 Yr Gilt	Mar-99	108.12				76.00			
German Bund	Mar-99	116.69							
Italian Bond	Mar-99	114.50	114.63	114.45	11467.00	36621.00			
Japan Govt Bd	Mar-99	129.68	129.80	128.86	3828.00				
3 Mth Sterling	Mar-99	94.44	94.44	94.41	26428.00	188956.00			
3 Mth Eurodollar	Mar-99	94.81	94.82	94.77	26772.00	171515.00			
3 Mth Eurodollar	Mar-99	96.81	96.81	96.81	1075.00	2181.00			
3 Mth Eurodollar	Mar-99	96.88	96.88	96.87	2004.00	243848.00			
3 Mth Eurodollar	Mar-99	97.00	97.01	97.00	1483.00	70793.00			
3 Mth Eurodollar	Mar-99	98.47	98.49	98.40	14339.00	62009.00			
3 Mth Eurodollar	Mar-99	98.36	98.38	98.39	7249.00	34375.00			
3 Mth Eurodollar	Mar-99	96.81							
3 Mth Eurodollar	Mar-99	96.83							
3 Mth Eurodollar	Mar-99	99.7700	6012.00	5882.00	22262.00	180800.00			

LIFFE FTSE 100 INDEX OPTION									
Series	Call	Put	Call	Put	Call	Put	Call	Put	Call
5900	215	55	30	327	168	429	257	511	284
5950	178	69	31	380	188	398	276	477	300
6000	141	26	36	396	207	367	295	442	317
6050	115	26	108	30	264	227	335	314	409

INDUSTRIAL METALS									
LME (\$/tonne)	Cash	Chg	3 month	Chg	1 Year	Chg	1 Year	Chg	1 Year
Aluminum Hg	1212.5	1213.5	-10.50	1220	1251	-10	635550	125	40
Aluminum Alloy	1015	1020	-5.00	1020	1020	-5	95880	-40	-40
Copper A	1409.5	1410.5	-25.50	1438	1438	-25	594800	2375	2375
Lead	474.5	474.5	-13.00	461	462	-7.5	107575	-775	-775
Nickel	3910	3920	-55.00	3980	3985	-60	66174	210	210
Tin	6030	6030	-110.00	5010	5010	-115	8265	35	35
Zinc	869.5	869.5	-10.00	871.5	871.5	-3	21723	175	175

PRECIOUS METALS									
pm fix/\$ per oz	Year's	Chg	Year's	Chg	Year's	Chg	Year's	Chg	Year's
Platinum	360.50-2.25	-3.50	Platinum	217.70-1.35	-4.65	Krugden	284.19	2.86	2.86
Palladium	332.00-0.10	0.28	Palladium	200.00-0.30	0.60	86.80	50	66.85	66.85
Silver	4.91-0.09	0.97	Silver	2.97-0.05	-0.61	Nobles	386.05		
Gold	286.40-0.75	2.20	Gold	285.87	-13.51	Maple Leaf	285.87	-13.51	-13.51

AGRICULTURAL AT 5:30PM									
Cocoa	Coffee	Barley	Potatoes	Soya Beans*	Cocoa	Coffee	Barley	Potatoes	Soya Beans*
LIFFE Europe	LIFFE \$/cwt	LIFFE \$/cwt	LIFFE \$/cwt	CBOT \$/bush	LIFFE Europe	LIFFE \$/cwt	LIFFE \$/cwt	LIFFE \$/cwt	CBOT \$/bush
Mar99 9707.00	Jan99 1875.00	Jan99 77.75	Mar99 255.00	Apr99 545.50	Mar99 9707.00	Jan99 1875.00	Jan99 77.75	Mar99 255.00	Apr99 545.50
May99 9229.00	Mar99 1825.00	Mar99 78.00	Apr99 331.00	May99 547.25	May99 9229.00	Mar99 1825.00	Mar99 78.00	Apr99 331.00	May99 547.25
Vol: 0	Vol: 0	Vol: 0	Vol: 0	Vol: 0	Vol: 0	Vol: 0	Vol: 0	Vol: 0	Vol: 0
White Sugar	Freight	Wheat	Corn*	Liga Potatoes	White Sugar	Freight	Wheat	Corn*	Liga Potatoes
LIFFE \$/cwt	LIFFE \$/cwt	LIFFE \$/cwt	CBOT \$/bush	LIFFE \$/cwt	LIFFE \$/cwt	LIFFE \$/cwt	CBOT \$/bush	LIFFE \$/cwt	LIFFE \$/cwt
Mar99 254.00	Jan99 795.00	Mar99 78.25	Mar99 215.75	Jan99 39.90	Mar99 254.00	Jan99 795.00	Mar99 78.25	Mar99 215.75	Jan99 39.90
Vol: 0	Vol: 0	Vol: 0	Vol: 0	Vol: 0	Vol: 0	Vol: 0	Vol: 0	Vol: 0	Vol: 0

OTHER SPOT RATES									
Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country
Australia	1.6570	0.6095	UK	0.6378	0.3850	Canada	0.6378	0.3850	US
Belgium	2.0021	1.1699	France	0.5369	0.3370	Denmark	0.5369	0.3370	Denmark
Canada	1.1761	0.6095	Germany	0.5369	0.3370	Italy	0.5369	0.3370	Italy
Denmark	49.158	3.1046	Japan	0.5369	0.3370	Malaysia	0.5369	0.3370	Malaysia
Euro	5.5922	3.1046	Netherlands	0.5369	0.3370	New Zealand	0.5369	0.3370	New Zealand
Finland	36.831	3.1046	Russia	0.5369	0.3370	South Africa	0.5369	0.3370	South Africa
France	219.03	3.1046	South Korea	0.5369	0.3370	Spain	0.5369	0.3370	Spain
Germany	42.50	3.1046	Sweden	0.5369	0.3370	Switzerland	0.5369	0.3370	Switzerland
Hong Kong	7.4718	3.1046	Thailand	0.5369	0.3370	US	0.5369	0.3370	US
Italy	129.68	3.1046	UAE	0.6080	0.3670				

GOLDMAN SACHS COMMODITY INDICES AT 5:30PM									
BASE DATE	LAST	%CHG	31 DEC	%CHG	31 DEC	%CHG	31 DEC	%CHG	31 DEC
Index	1970=100	133.81	-1.14	-0.85	215.26	-37.84			
Agricultural	1970=100	184.96	-1.15	0.83	231.23	-20.01			
Energy	1970=100	44.54	-1.00	-1.30	25.86	-1.00			
Metals	1970=100	126.24	0.00	0.00	166.79	-25.21			
LIFFE	1970=100	137.72	1.41	1.04	191.03	-27.91			
Price Metals	1970=100	379.60	-0.09	-0.02	463.54	-18.11			

www.bloomberg.com									
Source: Bloomberg									

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SPORT



Graham Bell, at his Henley home (above) and in action at the 1995 World Championships in Saalbach (below), is looking to find a Briton with downhill dash **Robert Hallam**

MacArthur in a hurry to go places

New faces for 1999: A determined talent is single-handedly taking the sailing world by storm. By Stuart Alexander

ON HER way to her retired teacher parents' home in Whatstandwell at Christmas, Ellen MacArthur groaned as the windscreen wipers on her car failed. "It was tipping it down and I had to be at a television interview," she said, "so I removed the cover under the bonnet, fished around, found the missing nut, and fixed it. It took half an hour, but most people would have called out the AA. I just thrive on problems."

The 22 year old, who is making a meteoric impact on British sailing, can sometimes be breathtakingly simplistic in her own self-belief. When she says you can do anything if you put your mind to it the accompanying facial expression is not one hoping for agreement but almost irritated that there should be any doubt.

There was no doubt in her mind when she started saving her school lunch money at the age of eight to save up for a boat, the first of which was an eight-foot dinghy. Nor when she bought a 17-foot cabin cruiser, or the 21-foot Corribee, in which she sailed single-handed round Britain at the age of 18. In the same year she had won the Young Sailor of the Year award for gaining both her Yachtmaster's and Yacht Instructor's certificates, and Derbyshire is a long way from the sea.

Nor is there any doubt in her mind that she will be on the start line in November next year for the French-organised single-handed, non-stop round the world race, the Vendee Globe. She has been in a hurry putting the sort of curriculum vitae together that will convince a major sponsor to build her a new, 60-foot yacht of the type now being campaigned by Mike Golding in the Around Alone Race, and which he will also be sailing in that race. MacArthur even went to work for the same Cherbourg boat builder, just so she would be better informed.

And not for the first time. She was the only woman shopfloor worker at Bowman Yachts on England's south coast, and lived in her 21-footer, with intermittent electricity and icy decks, on the nearby pontoon so she could use the office at night to send out "thousands" of sponsorship proposals.

Life then improved with a move to a portable office in a Hamble boatyard, working on her now-business partner's Mini-Transat 21-foot racing boat, continuing her search for support for her own similar project, and crewing on a series of cross-Channel races on summer weekends.

That led to an invitation to help bring a 60-footer back across the Atlantic. "I was really happy, I didn't want it to stop when we reached France," she says. But stop it did, as she flew back across the Atlantic to crew for Vittorio Malingir in the Quebec to St Malo Race. And she then stood still just long enough to arrange to jump on to a similar racing 50-footer belonging to the Italian Giovanni Soldini and another delivery trip to Italy.

The pace then picked up, with her own Mini-Transat, helped by some support from her grandmother's trust fund, a two-handed Round Britain Race, and then the Route du Rhum single-handed to Guadeloupe in November.

That was with the support of the B&Q, Woolworths Kingfisher Group, which also just happens to be in the process of buying the French company Castorama and whose chief executive, Sir Geoff Mulcahy, owns two large yachts. "I have been very busy, it's been very hard, and it's taken a lot out of me, but this year has worked out absolutely just brilliantly," she says.

At the moment the wisest than her years Ellen MacArthur is looking no more than two years ahead. But a much longer glittering career beckons.

Bell's mountainous task to reinvent British skiing

IT IS NOT easy to take competitive skiing seriously in Britain. There is something lacking in the sport's presentation. The image is quite wrong. We think of snow and skis and we think of documentaries of first-timers doing the splits and burying their faces on nursery slopes. We think of snooty chalet girls emptying the bins at a lodge and then filling themselves with alcohol. We think, primarily, of the ski-jumper Eddie Edwards. It's a long way back to gravitas from there.

The man charged with parting the pistes and leading us into a respected land is at least another alpine figure of whom most have heard. Graham Bell (as in Martin and Graham Bell) has recently been appointed as the British Ski and Snowboard Federation's director of performance. It might be quite a job, but at least his business cards will be big and impressive.

Bell is an unlikely administrator, 33 yesterday and possessing a pre-Raphaelite haircut. His appointment is part of the sweep by a new broom. "The old fogies have been cleared out of British skiing," he says. "The board has changed from the amateurs who were doing it for the love of the sport, some of whom were good with their time and effort, but the whole thing needed a change."

Graham Bell has competed at five winter Olympics, a record for any British athlete. He was British No 1 for three years before his recent retirement. Now he has to produce a figure to better his achievements. As a task it is, in more than one sense, mountainous.

Last year the BSSF received £200,000 of funding from the Sports Council plus another £180,000 from sponsorship and commercial activities. Much of that was provided by the properties company British Land, which is clearly taking a long-term view in return for the investment. By comparison, the Swiss receive £3.1m, France £2m and mighty Slovenia £1.2m. The figure for Austria is off the map.

"We can't compare ourselves with the Austrians or the Swiss," Bell says. "We're not even the equivalent of a small region in Austria. We're more like a village."

"In fact, it might even be a little worse than that because all our talented skiers are dotted around all over the place and not in a village training and competing with one

A veteran of five winter Olympics is charged with burying the sport's Eddie the Eagle image. By Richard Edmondson

another, bringing each other on. But miracles can happen."

Bell's initial contract is for six months when six years might seem more appropriate. His first major obligation comes on Saturday, when he monitors the beginning of the National Ski Championships at Tignes, one of France's more charming resorts, denuded of woodland and consequently of character.

The resort beneath the glacier of Grand Motte, one of Savoie's highest peaks, regularly plays host to the

a top senior with the chance of an Olympic medal.

"One day we'll have one, maybe two, incredibly talented skiers coming along and we need to have the system in place to look after them. We can't screw it up."

As he snowploughs this difficult furrow, Bell has in mind the fecund ground for locating a champion. It is pretty much the area he came from himself, parents more with great designs for their offspring than great wealth. The new director has

"We've had a few racers on the team with incredibly wealthy parents but they tend not to do as well as children of middle-earning parents who give total support. There is so much of a struggle and so much of a commitment that you usually find that the really well-off kids just say 'sod it, I'm off to do something a little more fun'."

As he goes about this business Graham Bell is forever haunted by a spectre. It is wearing thick glasses and falling out of the sky. Eddie

huge mistake made by the British Ski Federation," Bell says. "They didn't set any qualifying level for ski jumping at Calgary. That's why he got there. The alpine and cross-country skiers had to reach a certain standard but he didn't. It should never have happened."

But happen it did, and Graham Bell can change the profile of British skiing only by locating a different sort of headline-maker. "The first thing I have to do is talent-identification - to find out where our real talent lies," he says.

"We've got about half a dozen realistic chances of a top 10 World Cup placing. And you can't chart it much better than that in skiing, because if you have the potential to get in the top 10 you have the potential to win."

"It's a very variable sport. It's unpredictable. You can get a particularly good pair of skis or you can start in an area of the field where a tailwind suddenly picks up or the sun comes out for you and instantly you're one of half a dozen people who have an advantage."

"That can be enough to set off a whole chain of events. You get a good result, your confidence improves and people start to give you a better pair of skis. It can all spiral upwards very quickly. To have a chance of getting into the top 10 of World Cup skiers you have to have started skiing by seven at the latest (and that means years old as opposed to o'clock)."

"You have to have started racing aged 10. By 13 you can tell who has got the talent and by 15 you can put the safe bets on about who is going to be a good competition skier."

"But we're going to need coaches for these people and coaching is another problem I have to address. How do you get British coaches to the level of their European counterparts? We can't always survive on buying Austrian coaches, especially as you lose them as soon as they start doing a very good job. That's the catch-22."

"In the history of British skiing there are about 10 occasions when a coach has been whisked off by the Austrian ski federation waving a cheque book."

They don't wave a cheque book in British skiing, it's more likely to be the white flag. Graham Bell has taken on an Everest, but at least when it comes to communications he has the right name.



'I have to make sure there is a clear pathway for a talented 10 or 11-year-old to establish themselves as a top senior. One day we'll have one, maybe two. We can't screw it up'

British piste-basher, the recreation skier winding wildly down the open snowfields. But, it may be, that one day such a setting will see a young British talent weaving through the savannah of joyriders.

"We have got this huge participation behind us with almost half a million skiers going abroad from Britain each year," Bell says. "I have to make sure there is a clear pathway for a talented 10 or 11-year-old skier to establish themselves as

found that the Camillas and Ruperts of the sport can get distracted by the attractions of a hunt ball."

"A lot of our skiers are the product of dedicated parents," he says. "People talk about how parents get too involved and pushy, but in skiing it's the only way."

"My mother, particularly, did everything she could to help us and if that meant getting us up for a morning jog then that's what she would do. It's got to be done."

Edwards finished 58th out of 58 ski-jumping at the 1988 winter Olympics in Calgary and received more publicity than the winner. This may have upset the north Americans and their finely honed sense of irony, but it also exposed another nation's rather odd character trait. Eddie the Eagle returned to Britain the conquering hero, a charming clown more feted than any victor would have been.

"Eddie Edwards was a huge,



Ellen MacArthur sets out at the start of the Route du Rhum single-handed race last November **Peter Bentley**

TOMORROW

BOB CHAMPION, GRAND NATIONAL WINNER AND CANCER SURVIVOR, CLOSES THE STABLE DOOR FOR THE LAST TIME

Rafter makes a winning return

THE TWICE US Open champion, Pat Rafter, survived some difficult early moments yesterday before winning his first match after a two-month lay-off through injury.

Rafter, currently the world No 4 but with the top ranking firmly in his sights this year, beat Japan's Takao Suzuki 6-3, 6-0 to reach the second round of the Australian men's hard-court championships in Adelaide. "I didn't really start picking up a racket until after Christmas so my preparation hasn't been the most ideal coming into this tournament, but hopefully it will be for the Australian Open," he said.

Another player who considers himself a candidate to be No 1, the American Michael Chang, snatched a 6-3, 3-6, 6-3 win over the French qualifier Sebastien Grosjean. Chang, once ranked second but down now to 29th, said the top ranking was one of four career goals he had yet to achieve. "The other three are to win the remaining three Grand Slams I haven't won yet," he said.

At the age of 17 years and three months, Chang became the youngest man to win a Grand Slam tournament, the French Open in 1989, and has won an ATP title every year since 1988. However, he was plagued by injuries to his wrist and knee last year and finished out of the men's top 20 for the first time in a decade. However, he said he was never tempted to retire.

"I think sometimes people forget I'm only 26 years old," Chang pointed out.

Among those joining Rafter and Chang in the second round was the fifth-seeded Byron Black of Zimbabwe, who beat Vince Spadea 1-6, 7-6, 6-2 in temperatures exceeding 40C. But the former world No 1, Jim Courier, made an early exit from the tournament, beaten 7-5, 6-3 by Slava Dosedel of the Czech Republic.

Meanwhile in the Australian women's hardcourt championships on Queensland's Gold Coast, the No 3 seed, Irina Spirela of Romania, overcame some early troubles to beat the Australian Rachel McQuillan, 7-6, 6-3. In another match, Australia's Annabel Ellwood took the first set against Anne-Gaelle Sidot of France. But

TENNIS

BY DERRICK WHYTE

after being down from an early break in the second set, Sidot fought back to record a 3-6, 6-4, 6-1 victory. Sidot will next play the German Anke Huber, who defeated South Africa's Mariann de Swardt, 6-3, 6-2.

Spirela said she had been suffering with a head cold for a couple of days and had considered pulling out when she and McQuillan were 4-4 in the first set. "I was not feeling well at all," Spirela said. "But I don't pull out."

In the next round, Spirela faces Israel's Anna Smashnova, who defeated Latvia's Larissa Neiland 6-0, 6-3 yesterday.

On the west coast of Australia, Karol Kucera fought off a gallant challenge from the little-known Ivo Heuberger as Slovakia went on to claim a 2-1 victory over Switzerland at the Hopman Cup mixed teams tournament in Perth.

Kucera rallied to beat Heuberger, 5-7, 6-4, 6-3, to put the defending champions on level terms after Martina Hingis had swept aside Karina Habsudova, 6-0, 6-3. Switzerland, with Hingis the holder of all four Grand Slam doubles titles, were favourites to win the decisive match, but Heuberger dropped serve three times in the opening set to put the Slovaks on their way to a 6-4, 6-0 upset.

Greg Rusedski has confirmed that he will appear in the Guardian Direct Cup, to be held in Battersea Park, London, next month.

Rusedski joins a top-class field that includes the reigning Australian Open champion, Petr Korda, the 1998 Wimbledon finalist, Cedric Pioline, and the former Wimbledon champion Richard Krajicek.

The British No 2 and world No 9 is keen not to repeat last year's first-round exit to Germany's Marc-Kevin Goellner. Rusedski said: "I'm really looking forward to playing in Battersea Park. The atmosphere was fantastic last year. I hope I can progress to the later stages this year and I am sure I can with the support of a home crowd."

The event will be staged in a giant marquee and begins on 22 February.



Martina Hingis, of Switzerland, plays a forehand during her 6-0, 6-3 Hopman Cup win over Slovakia's Karina Habsudova in Perth yesterday AP

Holzer turns tables on Austrians

SKIING

THE ITALIAN Patrick Holzer rallied from sixth place after the first run to win his first World Cup race in seven years and upset the dominant Austrians with victory in a giant slalom in Kranjska Gora, Yugoslavia, yesterday.

The 28-year-old Holzer produced a flawless second run to finish in two minutes, 14.91sec. Austria's Christian Mayer, who led after the first run, finished second in 2:15.15. Mayer, 26, won the giant slalom at the same venue last year.

"I feel a little strange being ahead of the Austrians," said

Holzer. "They are so strong. I still can't believe it."

The biggest surprise of the day was that of overall World Cup leader Hermann Maier, who failed to live up to expectations, finishing only 20th. "I can surprise people in both good and bad ways," Maier said. "Sometimes these things happen." The 1998 overall World Cup winner, Maier has won four races this season and was one of the race favourites. "It was a difficult course today that didn't suit my style," Maier added.

"But I am confident I'll do better in the next races in Austria."

Austrian Stephan Eberharter, who led the World Cup giant slalom standings going into the race, finished 16th and slid to fourth in the standings.

Switzerland's Michael Von Gruenigen, the world giant slalom champion, finished eighth. Holzer's last victory was in 1992 when he won a super-G in Garmisch, Germany. His skiing this season has been steadily improving and at the last giant slalom race in Alta Badia, Italy, he was second. "I am 28 so it's time I either make it or go

home," Holzer said. "The only thing I have changed is that I have become more aggressive."

The men's racing continues tomorrow with a World Cup slalom.

Norwegians Espen Bjervig and Bente Martinson won the men's and women's races yesterday in the first World Cup cross-country event to be held in Estonia. The competition was threatened by a lack of snow, and went ahead only after Estonian soldiers spread artificial snow on the hilly 5km trail, making for a rough and often icy route.

Bjervig finished the 15km race in 40min 8.6sec, nearly 40 seconds ahead of Finland's Mika Myllyla. Sweden's Anders Bergstrom was third.

The victory boosted Bjervig to fourth in the overall standings. Countryman Bjorn Daehlie remains at the top, although he did not compete at Otepaa. Mathias Fredriksson remains second in the standings after an eighth-place finish yesterday.

Martinson won the 10km classical race in 30:08.6, more than 30 seconds ahead of Sweden's Antonina Ordina. Kristina Smigun of Estonia was third.

McRae makes Walters captain

RUGBY LEAGUE

BY DAVE HADFIELD

GATESHEAD THUNDER will be captained in their first season in Super League by one of the most respected leaders in the world game following the appointment of Kerrod Walters yesterday. The former Australian Test hooker arrived at the weekend as part of the second wave of Thunder's imports from Down Under and will skipper the new franchise.

"Although there were a lot of well-qualified players for the position of captain, Kerrod was the obvious choice," said the Gateshead coach, Shaun McRae. "His experience and natural leadership abilities make him the man for the job."

Wigan have narrowed down their search in Australia for a player to cover the hooker and half-back positions to two teammates of their latest recruit, Greg Florimo, at his former club, North Sydney.

The Wigan coach, John Monie, has approached both the experienced Mark Soden and the young utility player, Mark Reber, as possible back-up for Tony Smith and his first-choice hooker, Jon Clarke. Soden has played both scrum-half and hooker for the Bears, while Reber has been used mainly off the bench and can cover a variety of positions.

Any thoughts of bringing Brett Kimmorley to Central Park have been scuppered by Melbourne's insistence on retaining him for the remaining two years of his contract, but either one of the Norths players could be available because their club has signed the Queensland State of Origin hooker, Jamie Goddard, from the defunct Gold Coast Chargers. Another displaced Gold Coast player, the back-row forward Heath Crickshank, has joined Leigh.

A bid from a Coventry club headed by the former England rugby union forward Keith Fairbrother could win them a place in the Rugby League Conference for this summer.

The Conference, based in the South and Midlands, had intended to expand by four teams this year but Coventry's late bid is considered so persuasive that they might admit six new clubs when the new format is announced on Friday.

Bradford Bulls have been ordered to pay £25,000 to Hull Sharks for the promising forward Lee Radford, plus a further £10,000 after 15 first-team appearances and £15,000 after another 15 matches. A full international appearance would cost £10,000. Hull must pay Hunslet £5,000 for Bob Roberts.

Pugh predicts end of Europe split

RUGBY UNION

VERNON PUGH, the chairman of the International Rugby Board, believes that the dispute which has kept the English clubs out of European rugby could be settled next week.

The French directors of European Rugby Cup Ltd have been talking to the English clubs and will report back to the main board tomorrow. "I'd like to think things will move on from next Thursday's meeting," he said. "The date by which everything was due to be sorted out was 31 January. It would be nice if we could do it by next week. What we need is

a structured season in which Europe fits in properly. The French have been making it clear to the English clubs that all the talk of an Anglo-French competition is a non-starter. There are no problems in terms of finance for the European Cup. We have a four-year deal with ISL Worldwide that is worth a minimum of £10m and should grow to £15m.

"On top of that, all the TV companies in France are showing fantastic interest in buying up the rights there for next

season onwards and we've shown in the past with the Sky TV deal what can be achieved in the UK."

Meanwhile, the Wasps manager Nigel Melville will warn his players that tonight's London derby with Saracens at Loftus Road is a match that neither side can afford to lose. Third-placed Saracens currently hold a two-point advantage over Wasps.

"It's obvious that neither of us can afford to lose more ground on Northampton and Leicester at the top," he said. "We have both lost to a bottom-

two club recently, Saracens against London Scottish while we have come back from the North-east beaten by West Hartlepool."

Wasps have already gained partial revenge for Saracens' 48-18 win over them in last year's Telford's Bitter Cup final. They won the return Allied Dunbar Premiership One match 31-17, and Melville said: "It would be satisfying to do the league double. We would go back third after our weekend defeat and Saracens' win, which enabled them to jump over us."

The Saracens player-coach, Francois Pienaar, who is still sidelined with a foot injury, is determined to stop that happening despite his side's patchy recent form.

"We have played nowhere near our best since Christmas, losing to Scottish and taking a long time before the tries started flowing when we beat Bedford last weekend," he said.

"At least we did put away the scores but it gets harder now, although we have Alain Penaud recovered from his 'dead' leg to take the decisions at stand-off."

Williams holds nerves

DARTS

BOLTON'S Paul Williams regained his rhythm to beat Matt Clark of Sevenoaks 3-2 after losing a two-sets lead in the first round of the Embassy World Championship at Princes Green yesterday.

Williams, making his fifth successive appearance in the championship, although he had to qualify this year, said: "I started like a house on fire and I'm normally a slow starter."

"I won six of the first seven legs but then I probably went to sleep. In the final set I knew it was essential to break Matt.

I didn't want to get into a tie-break situation."

Clark won the first leg of the fifth set, but Williams held his darts to make it 1-1 and then, helped by a maximum 180, broke his rival to lead 2-1.

Then, needing to hold his darts again for victory, he gave Clark no chance to shoot for a double, checking out with a 64 after another maximum had helped him on the way.

Andy Fordham provided a mild shock when he beat sixth-seeded Mervyn King 3-2 -

despite his rival having six 180s during the match.

King, from Ipswich, invariably scores high but Fordham, landlord of the Queen's Arms in Woolwich, clinched a keenly contested match because of his deadlier finishing, landing 12 doubles in only 22 attempts.

"I was worried about not finishing well because I know how well Mervyn can score," Fordham said.

"But I think that was the best I have played in the Embassy, even though I've been a semi-finalist twice."

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Rain puts Ladbroke card in jeopardy

RACING

SATURDAY'S LADBROKE Hurdle is in doubt. The Leopardstown card, which stages the big handicap, is subject to a 4pm inspection tomorrow following heavy rain. Tom Burke, Leopardstown's racing manager, said last night: "We had very heavy rain last night and again this morning. Patches of the course are very wet and although there is no standing water, it is very sloppy. We are expecting further rain tonight and on Thursday."

Haydock's meeting on Saturday is also in doubt. The going is already officially heavy, and further rain would put the meeting in danger.

Leicester's meeting next Tuesday is another threatened. A spokesman said: "The going is Good to Soft, Soft in places on

the Chase course, but Heavy over Hurdles. It couldn't stand much more rain."

Tomorrow's card at Market Rasen is "very safe", despite the abandonment of the two steeplechases. Clerk of the course Charlie Moore said: "We have had to abandon the chases but the hurdles course is a different kettle of fish. It is Soft. Good to Soft in the back straight. By dividing the conditional jockeys' hurdle, we will have six races, starting at 1.10."

Today's three meetings appear safe, however, with Fergus Cameron, Lingfield assistant clerk of the course, confident the Turf card will go ahead. "The forecast is for it to remain dry," he said.

LINGFIELD

HYPERION

12.50 The Robe 1.20 Park Royal 1.50 Kingdom Of Shades 2.20 Tresor De Mal 2.50 Gladiator IV 3.20 Miss Pennyhill 3.50 Derisbay

GOING: Heavy.
Left-hand, sharp undulating course. Run-in of 200yds.
Course is SE of town on E202. Lingfield station (served by London, Victoria) adjoins course. ADWISOR: One Enclosure £20. CAR PARK: Club £2; remainder free.

FIVE-YEAR STATISTICS
LEADING TRAINERS: M Phipps 12-48 (24.5%), G L Moore 11-45 (24.4%), N Harrison-Davies 9-38 (23.7%), J Gifford 7-37 (18.5%).
LEADING JOCKEYS: R Dwyer 11-37 (23.7%), A P McCoy 10-41 (24.6%), M A Fitzgerald 6-36 (67.5%), N Williams 6-42 (64.2%).
FAVOURITES: 122-272 (44.9%).
BLINKERED FIRST TIME: True Fortune (150).

12.50 CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS NOVICE HCAP HURDLE (F) £2,250 2m 3f 110yds

1 25-22 IRVY CONSTER (2) (2) De Hean 5 11 10... J Magee
2 20-22 KIDNEY (2) (2) Kild 7 11 7... J Magee
3 20-22 CLEAR WATER (2) (2) P Widdow 7 11 5... M Gifford
4 20-22 WALK ON BY (1) (1) J King 5 11 4... I Cammisa
5 02-2 THE ROSE (18) A Camd 4 10 7... O McPhail
6 24-20 KILMURRAY (2) (2) O'Brien 5 10 5... M Beesley
7 05-1 RIVER FRONTIER (2) (2) M Lohr 4 10 3... L Corcoran
8 40-5 LORR REGAL (2) (2) M Phipps 5 10 0... G Sappie
9 PFFP-P AVONCLIFF (4) (4) P Haywood 6 10 0... J Goldstein

Minimum weight: 10st. True Fortune: Novice 1st 120.
BETTING: 6-4 The Robe, 4-1 Lord Regal, 5-1 Walk On By, 7-1 Kidney, 5-1 River Frontiers, 10-1 Ivory Comets, 12-1 Kilmurra, 14-1 others

FORM VERDICT

THE ROSE should cope with this step up in trip and is the one to beat, though Lord Regal would be very interesting if at least translating bumper form to hurdle.

1.20 GODSTONE SELLING HURDLE (CLASS G) £2,000 added 2m 110yds

1 01-0 MISTER WOODSTOCK (2) (2) D Ougden 6 11 11... J Other (5)
2 22-20 ROUND ROBIN (2) (2) M A Johnson 5 11 11... J A McCarthy (5)
3 30-4 WONDERBOY (2) (2) J R Poulton 5 11 4... J Magee
4 12-2 JAMES (2) (2) M A Johnson 5 10 12... J V Chapman (7)
5 05-1 BLUE (1) (1) R Simpson 4 10 0... M J Dunn (7)
6 04-1 PARK ROYAL (1) (1) R Simpson 4 10 0... M A Fitzgerald
7 PFFP-P MISS SCOOTER (2) (2) M Maggidge 4 10 0... D Church (7)

BETTING: 5-1 Park Royal, 4-1 Round Robin, 5-2 Miss Scooter, 6-1 Blue, 12-1 Wonderboy, 14-1 Mister Woodstock, 25-1 Lily Jackson

FORM VERDICT
Miss Scooter was in front of both GI Blues and PARK ROYAL when she fell at Windsor, but she was weathering all the time and, given her flat record, it is far from certain that she would have retained that superiority had she stayed on her feet. This demanding ground will impose an even more searching test, and preference is for Park Royal, who proved himself under the conditions last month.

1.50 HATED NOVICE CHASE (CLASS E) £4,000 added 3m

1 15-22 TRUE FORTUNE (2) (2) V Dwyer 6 11 5... J Gifford (5)
2 20-22 BRACKENHEATH (1) (1) D Gifford 6 11 4... J A McCarthy
3 20-22 JAMES JUSTICE (2) (2) M A Johnson 5 11 4... J Magee
4 20-22 KINGDOM OF SHADES (2) (2) R Simpson 5 11 4... J V Chapman
5 15-22 LORD KILMURRAY (1) (1) G Hubbard 6 11 4... J Thornton
6 15-22 THE BETTY (2) (2) R Simpson 5 11 4... J Dwyer
7 PFFP-P SHOULD HAVESADNO (2) (2) R Simpson 5 11 4... J Gifford
8 15-22 LORD KILMURRAY (1) (1) G Hubbard 6 11 4... J Thornton

BETTING: 7-4 Kingdom Of Shades, 8-4 True Fortune, 5-2 Brackenheath, 6-1 Lord Kilmurra, 25-1 others

FORM VERDICT
It goes against the grain not to tip a Novice Williams horse these days but there is a slight doubt about Kingdom Of Shades' stamina in the ground and preference is for True Fortune and BRACKENHEATH. It is hard to choose between the pair but Brackenheath comes from a stable in top form and will be suited by ground and trip.

2.20 SEVENOAKS NOVICE CHASE (CLASS E) £4,000 added 2m

1 14-2 ROYAL TOAST (2) (2) M Henderson 7 11 10... M A Fitzgerald
2 02-4 LITTLE SHEPHERD (2) (2) M Maggidge 7 11 3... S Clifford
3 20-22 MONROE (2) (2) R Rowe 7 11 3... R Dwyer
4 01-4 SHERMAN HENRY (2) (2) R Shaw 6 11 3... C Llewellyn
5 PFFP-P GUNNOL DU COCKNET (2) (2) M A Johnson 5 11 4... J A McCarthy
6 12-2 TRESOR DE MAL (2) (2) M Phipps 5 11 0... A P McCoy (5)

BETTING: 2-1 Tressor De Mal, 5-4 Monroe, 5-2 Royal Toast, 10-1 Gunndol Du Cocknet, 12-1 Shermon Henry, 25-1 Little Shepherd

FORM VERDICT
Martin Phipps has such an outstanding record with similar types that Tressor De Mal has to be considered, while Royal Toast has the best chase form. However, MONROE has always looked like a chaser with a future and he can make a winning debut over the larger obstacles. Ideally, he would want further but has those to race up with the pace and the drop back to 2m may not be too much of an inconvenience on ground that is likely to be very testing.

2.50 HORLEY MAIDEN HURDLE (CLASS E) £2,900 added 2m 110yds

1 00-4 BABY LANCASTER (14) M Griffin 5 11 7... M Gifford (5)
2 30-4 GLADIATOR IV (2) (2) P Phipps 5 11 7... R Dwyer
3 TALK OF A ROSE (2) (2) M A Johnson 5 11 7... R Thornton
4 01-4 TELLION (2) (2) J Dwyer 5 11 7... J Dwyer
5 01-4 UNDER THE CARPET (2) (2) M Phipps 5 11 7... J Dwyer
6 22-24 GALAXY (2) (2) M Phipps 5 11 2... A P McCoy
7 PFFP-P RED BROOK LAD (2) (2) S Dwyer 4 10 9... M A Fitzgerald

BETTING: 4-4 Gladiator IV, 5-1 Tallow, 11-4 Galax, 5-1 Red Brook Lad, 10-1 Under The Carpet, 14-1 Talk Of A Rose, 25-1 others

FORM VERDICT
This is an easier race than the last contest in which GLADIATOR IV ran last week, and providing he is not feeling any ill-effects, he should be his, though Tallow is a possible improver.

3.20 ROCK SAINT CHALLENGE TROPHY HCAP CHASE (D) £5,250 2m 4f 110yds

1 01-26 OVERWISE (2) (2) R Ather 6 11 11... A P McCoy
2 20-22 STREW STUFF (2) (2) J Dwyer 6 11 11... J Dwyer
3 30-23 SHOOK (2) (2) S Dwyer 6 11 5... J Dwyer
4 45-4 MISS PENNYHILL (1) (1) M A Johnson 5 11 0... J Dwyer
5 PFFP-P BENJAMIN LANCASTER (2) (2) M Griffin 5 11 4... M Gifford (5)

BETTING: 11-4 Miss Pennyhill, 9-4 Strew Stuff, 7-2 Another Deadly, 6-1 Overwise, 25-1 Benjamin Lancaster

FORM VERDICT
Miss Pennyhill looks the one to beat here after her impressive chase debut at Harford last time, but she is likely to be short and because there are doubts about her getting the trip, looks worth taking on. With Strew Stuff not certain to appreciate the ground and Overwise showing signs of improvement last time, the choice is ANOTHER DEADLY, who can be expected to improve a lot with his stable back in form.

3.50 SOUTHERN COUNTIES HANDICAP HURDLE (D) £4,000 added 2m 110yds

1 4-321 TICKETRY'S GET (1) (1) G L Moore 9 10 0... M Beesley (5)
2 40-50 THE (2) (2) J Dwyer 6 11 5... J Dwyer
3 30-23 SHOOK (2) (2) S Dwyer 6 11 5... J Dwyer
4 14-4 TAKE A TURN (2) (2) M A Johnson 5 11 0... J Dwyer
5 02-2 SURANOW (2) (2) M A Johnson 5 11 0... J Dwyer
6 43-5 GRAND CRU (2) (2) J Dwyer 6 11 0... J Dwyer
7 6-42 DERISBY (2) (2) J Dwyer 6 11 0... J Dwyer (5)

Minimum weight: 10st. True Fortune: Novice 1st 120.
BETTING: 9-4 Suranow, 5-2 Ticketry's Get, 9-2 Shook, 5-1 Derisby, 6-1 Take A Turn, 10-1 Grand Cru, 25-1 others

FORM VERDICT
SURANOW has been given time to get over his exertions at Leicester after a long absence and looks the one to beat at today's weights.

Kallis heaps more pain on West Indies

THEIR SPIRIT long since broken by superior, unforgiving opponents, the West Indies were on the point of their fourth successive defeat, even more crushing than the others, after four days of the fourth Test yesterday.

The 421 they were set for victory after the second South African declaration of the match was a meaningless statistic, never before achieved in Test cricket. There was only pride left, but there has been little evidence of that this tour and the West Indies had all but capitulated at close when they were 83 for 6, the captain, Brian Lara, falling to the jubilant left-arm spinner Paul Adams in the final over for 33. They again had no answer to South Africa's all-round quality, exemplified by the performance of Jacques Kallis.

The 23-year-old followed his 110 of the first innings with an unbeaten 88 in the second when Hansie Cronje closed the innings at 226 for 7 an hour after lunch. He immediately returned to snare two wickets in his first four overs when given the new ball in the absence of the injured Allan Donald and another in his second spell. He will be as popular in Wales next summer, when he joins Glamorgan, as he is in his native Cape Town.

The realistic West Indian ambitions when they set out on their second innings would have been modest. Victory was out of the question but to reach 300 for the first time in the series would be a triumph, to eke out a draw that would save them from a series whitewash as good as outright victory.

By now, South Africa had inflicted so many actual and psychological blows that the West Indies had lost all stomach for the fight. Donald, carrying a strained hamstring, took the field but did not bowl. Even without his menace, they were three down for 15 inside half an hour and even the multi-coloured national flags of their few hundred Caribbean supporters were nowhere to be seen.

After Shaun Pollock induced

CRICKET

BY TONY COZIER
in Cape Town

S Africa 406-8 dec & 226-7 dec
West Indies 212 & 93-6

a job to mid-on by Phil Wallace in his second over, the deceptively pacy Kallis dispatched Junior Murray and Shivnarine Chanderpaul to leave the West Indies 15 for 3 and their fate all but settled.

The left-handed Chanderpaul fell to a stunning low, left-handed catch at first slip by Daryll Cullinan, Kallis's partner in a first-innings stand of 235. When Lara and the vice-captain, Carl Hooper, checked the collapse over the next hour and 25 minutes, Kallis came back to bowl Hooper off the inside edge.

Pollock soon achieved his stated ambition of passing the 116 Test wickets of his father, Peter, the formidable fast bowler of an earlier time and now chairman of selectors. Ganga, lbw, was the young Pollock's 117th victim in his 29th Test, one more than his father.

Adams' removal of Lara, who had plundered him for a six and two fours, rounded the day off perfectly for South Africa.

Fourth day: South Africa won toss South Africa - First innings 406 for 8 dec (J H Kallis 110, D J Cullinan 158). WEST INDIES - First innings 212 (C L Hooper 86).

SOUTH AFRICA - Second innings (Overnight: 91 for 3)

J H Kallis not out 88
W J Cronje c Hooper b Dillon 54
J M Rhodes lbw Hooper 23
S M Pollock c Lara b Chanderpaul 3
IM V Burger c and b McLean 22
A A Donald not out 0
S Bhatia (not out) 0
Total (for 7 dec, 87.4 overs) 226

West Indies - Second innings (Overnight: 45 for 0)

M D Bell not out 25
M J Horne c Mongile b Smith 26
S P Fleming b Prasad 18
C D McMillan c Mongile b Singh 84
JA C Parore c Singh b Kumble 50
J Langer not out 46
D J Nash not out 46
Total (for 6, 40 overs) 93

Paul: 1-2-7-3-15-4-47-5-87-7-222.
D Ganga bow b Pollock 12-3-21-2 (40); Kallis 12-2-7-3; Cronje 1-0-0; Tabor 7-3-1-0; Adams 6-2-32-1.
Umpires: D S Ganga (NZ) and D L Orchard (SA).

McMillan puts NZ out of reach

CRAIG McMILLAN and Adam Parore pulled New Zealand out of trouble and put them in command of the third and final Test against India in Hamilton yesterday.

Their 140-run stand boosted the hosts from 85 for 4 to 323 for 6 by the end of the fourth day, 273 ahead. That put the match virtually beyond India and a draw would give New Zealand the series 1-0.

In losing four wickets, New Zealand scored only 44 in the two hours before lunch but the innings was brought to life by McMILLAN and Parore who occupied the crease throughout the second session. McMILLAN scored 84 and Parore 50, but both were dismissed with the total on 225.

McMILLAN, driving with power and punishing anything short, faced 102 balls and hit 13 fours. Parore's 50 came off 120 balls with six fours. Chris Cairns and Dion Nash carried on the good work, adding 98.

New Zealand 366 & 323-6
India 416

Anshuman Gaekwad, the India coach, admitted: "It will be difficult to win now. It was taken away from us by McMillan and Parore. With the benefit of hindsight I think we should have attacked from one end and tried to contain them from the other once they got set."

Fourth day: India won toss
NEW ZEALAND - First innings 366 (M J Horne 67, R G Weir 87, J Smith 59).
INDIA - First innings 416 (R D Pandey 132, S R Tendulkar 67, C L Cairns 4-107).

NEW ZEALAND - Second innings (Overnight: 45 for 0)

M D Bell not out 25
M J Horne c Mongile b Smith 26
S P Fleming b Prasad 18
C D McMillan c Mongile b Singh 84
JA C Parore c Singh b Kumble 50
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Dave Bassett (left) with the Nationwide First Division trophy in May 1998 and (right) during his final game in charge against Portsmouth on Saturday

Bassett victim of great divide

A manager is brought down by intransigent directors and discontent in the dressing-room. By Jon Culley

DAVE BASSETT'S dismissal as manager of Nottingham Forest yesterday relieved the 54-year-old Londoner of what had become a job perhaps beyond even his impressive capabilities. In his 18 years in management, Bassett has achieved some remarkable feats, taking Premiership Wimbledon all the way from the Fourth Division to the First and lifting Sheffield United from Third to First and keeping them there, against the odds, for four seasons.

But at Forest he found his efforts undermined from two directions: on the one hand, by a club board unwilling to provide desperately needed new funds, and on the other by a disillusioned and divided dressing-room. The heavy-handed, discourteous way in which he was sacked merely strengthened Bassett's antipathy towards the men who hired him almost two years ago after their successful takeover of the club.

Nigel Wray, a multi-millionaire property developer, is a rugby man apparently far more interested in the development

of Saracens, which he also owns, than with Forest, in which he was persuaded to invest at a time when football appeared to be a boom market. He is chairman of Forest plc but rarely attends their matches. Irving Scholar, the former Tottenham chairman, who became embroiled in a scandal over irregular payments at White Hart Lane, recruited Wray and other less-visible backers and became Forest's football consultant. He con-

trols transfer finance and other related matters but operates from his base in Monaco. Phil Soar, the chief executive who informed Bassett of his fate after it had appeared in a national newspaper, is a lifelong Forest supporter who hoped he and his colleagues could re-establish the club as a force at home and abroad but admitted recently that they had seriously underestimated what it would take to do so.

Scholar masterminded the signing of Pierre van Hooijdonk from Celtic, spending £4.5m in a deal that convinced supporters of the club's ambitions, despite their relegation from the Premiership, and proved to be Bassett's trump card in winning promotion back to the top flight - as First Division champions - at the first attempt.

The £16m takeover paid for Van Hooijdonk, but a substantial proportion - some £11.3m - went on settling existing debts, and the club has subse-

quently run up another deficit. In the last financial year, Forest traded at a loss of £7m.

Soar blamed soaring wage costs, which at £8m, including signing-on fees, absorbed 73 per cent of the club's revenue.

Certain circumstances are different now than we would have predicted," Soar said. "Player wages have risen by 50 per cent - further than we or anybody else would have imagined. That means that a club of our moderate means has a problem in the transfer market, not of finding a player to buy for £3m but affording his wages."

Money raised from Forest's flotation on the Alternative Investments Market fell well short of what had been anticipated. The club went public despite warnings from the City that the football market was over-funded and was able to generate only £2m in extra funds, when £3.5m had been originally put forward as a conservative estimate.

Wray and his partners have consistently refused to put more money into Forest, in-

sisting that Bassett financed further purchases through sales. Such players as he has received the go-ahead to buy - including Neil Shipperley, Dougie Freedman and Nigel Quashie - have so far fallen short of Premiership standard.

Meanwhile, the board angered Bassett last summer by selling the striker Kevin Campbell for £3m while he was on holiday and went over his head again when Van Hooijdonk embarked on a one-man strike in protest at what he perceived as the club's lack of ambition. Bassett declared that he would happily "leave Van Hooijdonk to rot" but Scholar and the board wanted him in the market place.

All of this had an effect on morale in the dressing-room. Yesterday, Mickey Adams, Bassett's assistant and the man given temporary charge, admitted that support for Bassett had not been unanimous.

"As happens when any manager is sacked, some players are highly disappointed, some are highly pleased, although I think most felt they had let him down," Adams said.

Arsenal's problems mount

NEIL REDFERN, The French midfielder starts his ban after Saturday's home game against Liverpool, and will miss the FA Cup fourth-round tie at Wolves, and League matches against Nottingham Forest and Chelsea. Caballero could face an FA dispute charge after an Argentinean was captured on television apparently lashing out at Preston's Ryan Kild after the third-round tie. Kidd fell after the incident, leaving Emmanuel Petit unmarked to score the third goal in Arsenal's 4-3 victory. The referee, Dermot Gallagher, took no action but the incident was brought to the

attention of the FA, which will study the pictures in conjunction with Gallagher's report. Gallagher reportedly overruled a mistaken red card for the Aston Villa goalkeeper, Michael Oakes, and is a supporter of using video evidence on appeals.

He could also be involved in Southampton's appeal against his dismissal of Ken Monkou during their FA Cup third-round draw with Second Division Fulham. Dave Jones, Southampton's manager, is unhappy that Gallagher showed Monkou a red card for what Jones considered to be simply a mistimed tackle on Rufus

Ferguson out for six weeks after surgery

DUNCAN FERGUSON, the Newcastle United striker who joined the club six weeks ago, is expected to be out for six weeks after undergoing surgery yesterday.

The £7m signing from Everton had an operation on an injured groin - a long-standing problem aggravated in the 4-2 defeat at Liverpool last month. "Duncan had an operation this afternoon in London and will be out for about six weeks," a club spokesman confirmed.

The man who is filling Ferguson's role at Everton,

Ibrahim Bakayoko, is set to miss his club's home FA Cup fourth-round tie with Ipswich on 23 January. The Ivory Coast striker is expected to be called up for their African Nations Cup game with Namibia scheduled for the following day. The Everton manager, Walter Smith, said: "Fifa regulations state that he must be released."

The Celtic striker Marko Viduka is expected to announce the relaunch of his Parkhead career today. He plans to join the team at their training camp in Spain next week.

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BOWLS

WORLD INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS (Hemel Hempstead, Herts) Pairs first round: D Ganga (NZ) and M McMillan (NZ) 14-24 behind; S J Klemm (NZ) 14-24 behind; S J Klemm (NZ) 14-24 behind; S J Klemm (NZ) 14-24 behind.

CRICKET

ONE-DAY MATCHES (Auckland, Aust): Sri Lanka 227 for 7 (P A de Silva 55; 50 overs). Australia 205 (D R Murray 58; 47.5 overs). Sri Lanka won by 24 runs.

DARTS

EMBASSY WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP (Lakeside Country Club, Frimley Green, Surrey) First round: Monday's late results: P Williams (Eng) bt M Clark (Eng) 3-2; A Fordham (Eng) bt P Hogan (Eng) 3-2; T Underwood (Eng) bt E Carty (Eng) 3-2; C Monk (Eng) bt P Hogan (Eng) 3-2.

HOCKEY

LOS REYES TOURNAMENT (Barcelona, Sp) Semi-finals: Canterbury 1 Polo 2; San Sebastian 3 Italia 5.

ICE HOCKEY

NHL: Nashville 2 Anaheim 1; Boston 5 Calgary 1; Carolina 4 Ottawa 4; NY Rangers 4 San Jose 3; Toronto 5 Tampa Bay 4 (OT); St Louis 4 Vancouver 0; Colorado 4 Montreal 3.

RALLYING

DAVAIL RALLY Fifth stage (630km, including a 624km Special Section, BR Monaghan to Ayr, Mauritania) Cars: 1 K Shizuka (Japan) Mitsubishi Gtr 14min 32sec; 2 M Prieto (Sp) Mitsubishi 14:54 behind; 3 J Klemm (NZ) 14:54 behind; 4 J L Schlessler (Fr) Schlessler 1:35:30; 5 J M Servie (Sp) Schlessler 1:35:30; 6 J M Servie (Sp) Schlessler 1:35:30; 7 J M Servie (Sp) Schlessler 1:35:30; 8 J M Servie (Sp) Schlessler 1:35:30; 9 J M Servie (Sp) Schlessler 1:35:30; 10 J M Servie (Sp) Schlessler 1:35:30; 11 J M Servie (Sp) Schlessler 1:35:30; 12 J M Servie (Sp) Schlessler 1:35:30; 13 J M Servie (Sp) Schlessler 1:35:30; 14 J M Servie (Sp) Schlessler 1:35:30; 15 J M Servie (Sp) Schlessler 1:35:30; 16 J M Servie (Sp) Schlessler 1:35:30; 17 J M Servie (Sp) Schlessler 1:35:30; 18 J M Servie (Sp) Schlessler 1:35:30; 19 J M Servie (Sp) Schlessler 1:35:30; 20 J M Servie (Sp) Schlessler 1:35:30; 21 J M Servie (Sp) Schlessler 1:35:30; 22 J M Servie (Sp) Schlessler 1:35:30; 23 J M Servie (Sp) Schlessler 1:35:30; 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SPORT

BELL TACKLES SLIPPERY SLOPES P19 • LARA'S GLOOMY THEME P23



Fifth Test: Spinners force collapse and Ashes defeat yet Stewart's men earn respect for a courageous performance

MacGill turns England nemesis

FOR THREE days this Sydney Test refused to lay down and die. When it finally did, the end was hastened, as it so often is with Alec Stewart's side, with a batting collapse. For once, the subsidence was understandable, and with the ball turning alarmingly, Stuart MacGill took 7 for 50, to give Australia victory and a well-deserved 3-1 win in the Ashes series.

Starting the day at 104 for 2, and needing 186 for a remarkable victory, England were all out 20 minutes after lunch, their last eight wickets falling for 88 runs. It may not have been the close ending many had hoped for, but Australia's victory by 98 runs, with a little over four and a half sessions to spare, was about par for the conditions. This season, the SCG has been a spinner's paradise and few teams batting last could have realistically expected to make more than 200.

"Once we lost the toss," said Stewart, "we always knew we were going to be up against it, especially against their three spinners. And it proved too much for us. At the start, we backed ourselves to get the 180-odd runs, but after losing two early wickets, we collapsed."

Early finishes have been a feature of this series, but with the riveting nature of the cricket here, no one was complaining. Over the four days 145,000 people came to the watch this thrilling match. Unless too much strong drink is consumed in the aftermath, none will forget it in a hurry and for once the England players could accept defeat with their heads high, something they could not have done after Adelaide.

Of course, they went into this match a spinner light, which is a bit like a golfer going into a deep greenside bunker without a sand wedge. Perhaps they felt that playing Ashley Giles, selected for the one-day side only, would have left them open to ridicule had it backfired.

The omission left Peter Such with a lone battle to fight, though one he rose to well, despite the absence of a left-arm paceman (a tactic on which England's selectors justified the selection of two off-spinners in the tour party) to create some early rough.

Generally though, England acquitted themselves well. In

By DEREK PRINGLE
in Sydney

Australia 322 & 184
England 220 & 188
Australia win the match by 98 runs and the Test series 3-1

trying circumstances, Stewart's men cannot have played with any more passion than they did here after losing a crucial toss. At the post-match press conference, Mark Taylor admitted as much, pointing out that here was an enhanced performance from England. "The most satisfying moment in the series was this game," Taylor said. "We got a big scare in Melbourne. Everything was going along beautifully until then."

"If anything I felt England played even better here than in Melbourne," he said. "They knew they had a sniff and they came out hard. They gave it everything in the field as well as with the ball and bat. That they still came out 90 odd runs short shows me that we've got a good side in that changing room."

He can say that again, and any potential upset England had in mind disappeared fairly quickly in the morning session when they lost Mark Ramprakash and Graeme Hick in the space of five overs.

With the ball having lost its hardness, runs became far harder to come by. Indeed Ramprakash, having failed to add to his overnight score of 14, became largely inert and it was his attempt to change that, with an injudicious cut shot off Glenn McGrath, that cost his wicket.

Against Australia these days, one man's mistake seems to be another's world record and Taylor's catch, low enough at first slip to require confirmation from the umpire at square leg, was his 157th in Tests. Afterwards he admitted that his poor batting form had led him to wear his baggy green cap.

"I don't really know what might happen over the next 12 months. I'm available for the West Indies but that's down to the selectors. If it was my last day of Test cricket in Australia, I just wanted to be sure that I wore the right outfit."

Hick, who was wearing a sunbat when he got out, was a mass of uncertainty, despite getting off the mark with a cut for four off McGrath. Normally



The England captain Alex Stewart (third from left) reflects on another series defeat along with Ramprakash, Hussain, Gough, Fraser and Tudor yesterday

Allsport

a powerful player of spin, he looked incapable of scoring and his demise at noon, bowled round the legs trying to sweep MacGill, looked like a man fighting rigor mortis.

Thereafter, only Nasser Hussain, with another fighting half-century, and Dean Headley, with some lusty blows, held up the victory parade for any length of time. In fact, when Hussain went even the Barry Army knew the game was up. For a while the singing stopped, as MacGill brought England finally to their knees.

Only John Crawley, given out lbw padding up to Colin

Miller from around the wicket, could have had any complaint, though Such's dismissal, caught and bowled by MacGill after the No 11 had crashed a long hop into Michael Slater's heel at silly point, was bizarre.

Considering MacGill's success in the first innings, it was interesting that Taylor had first called on Shane Warne. But if the man with 315 Test wickets to his name was the obvious choice, it was MacGill, the newcomer, who stamped his authority on the match with another superb performance.

Four years ago, MacGill was one of England's net bowlers;

here he was their nemesis. In the interim England's batsmen have become no better at coping with a turning ball, which, considering they do not see many wrist spinners is not all that surprising.

Before this series MacGill, a big spinner of the ball, was felt by many as being too excitable to bowl wrist-spin at Test level. Yet as his tally has grown - he finished the series with 27 wickets, the highest on either side - so has his confidence.

"He gets better every time he plays," ventured Taylor. "He used to bowl a bad ball every over. Now it's only every two or three overs."

MacGill was also made man of the match, his 12-107 in the game just shading Slater's excellent second-innings century. But while England were left to contemplate yet another defeat at the hands of their oldest foe, at least one celebration was being planned.

"Normally I'd be uncontrollable if I got seven wickets in a grade match for North Sydney," MacGill said. "God knows what will happen now I've taken them at the SCG in an Ashes Test and helped win the series."

Henry Blofeld, Tour and Test Averages, more cricket, page 22

SYDNEY SCOREBOARD

Fourth day: Australia won toss	
AUSTRALIA - First innings 322 (M E Waugh 121, S R Waugh 96, D W Headley 4-62)	11 min, 12 balls
ENGLAND - First innings 220 (S C G MacGill 5-37)	11 min, 12 balls
AUSTRALIA - Second innings 184 (M J Slater 123, P M Such 5-81)	11 min, 12 balls
ENGLAND - Second innings (Overnight: 104 for 2)	11 min, 12 balls
N Hussain c and b MacGill.....53	17 min, 13 balls, 2 fours
M R Ramprakash c Taylor.....14	60 min, 46 balls, 1 four
G A Hick b MacGill.....7	39 min, 25 balls, 1 four
J P Crawley lbw b Miller.....5	21 min, 14 balls
H W K Heggs c Healy b MacGill.....3	10 min, 10 balls
A J Tudor b MacGill.....3	27 min, 21 balls
D W Headley c Healy b MacGill.....16	25 min, 23 balls, 2 fours
D Gough not out.....7	21 min, 16 balls, 1 four
P M Such c and b MacGill.....2	11 min, 12 balls
Extras (b5, w1, nb3).....9	
Total (269 min, 66.1 overs).....188	
Fall (over): 5-110 (Ramprakash) 4-131 (Hick) 5-150 (Crawley) 6-157 (Heggs) 7-162 (Hussain) 8-175 (Tudor) 9-180 (Headley)	
Bowling: MacGill 10-1-40-1 (nb3) 14-0-26-0 6-1-14-1 Miller 17-1-38-16-1-15-0 8-0-24-1 MacGill 20-1-3-23-6 (nb1) 18-3-43-1 (15-3-31-1, 4-0-12-0) Progress: Fourth day: 150-206 min, 49.5 overs, Lunch: 175-7 (Tudor 3, Headley 12) 60 overs, Innings closed: 2.03pm	
Hussain 50: 152 min, 124 balls, 2 fours	
Umpires: R S Dunne and D B Hair	
AUSTRALIA WON BY 98 RUNS AND SERIES 3-1	

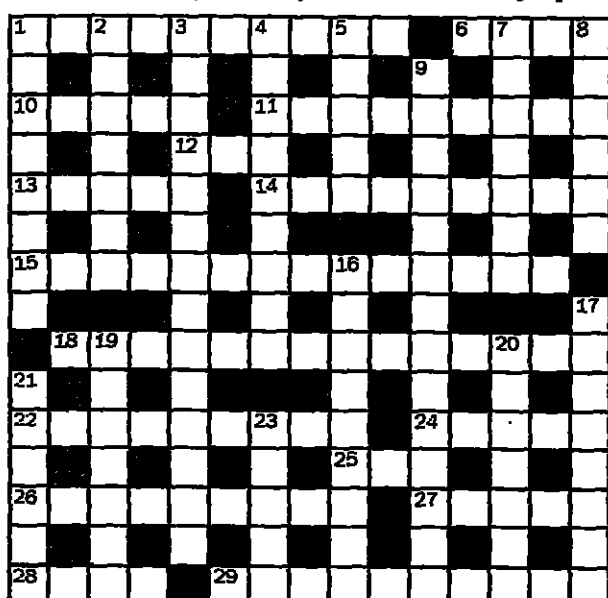
Compiled by Jo King

THE WEDNESDAY CROSSWORD

No.3812 Wednesday 6 January

by Aquila

Tuesday's Solution



ACROSS

- Flabbergasts in silent institutes (10)
- Just show (4)
- One who has remedies for a smoker (5)
- At speed in vehicles with hard tops (9)
- Sand bank from which people drive off (3)
- Go out, dressed in gold, for so long (5)
- Broken window, we hear, as in clergyman's office (9)
- Emma has titanic struggle with wranglers in Cambridge (14)
- Wild pansy to cherish whilst pottering (4-2-8)
- Roger Hooie could be short of energy, but his work is on time (9)

DOWN

- Protests loudly against moving of decimals (8)
- Revolutionary big hit in trade-centre going up (7)
- Bank officials supporting lot of diviners (7-7)
- Acrobatic ace, in turn, up in the air (9)
- Rustic rolling endlessly

- Extraordinary caution needed where lots of people are knocked down (7)
- Returns with final score (6)
- Five to two, say, on dice? (8,6)
- Indian, not opening, assessed as "hardened" (9)
- A body-building compound for a space-traveller (8)
- Unit of magnetic field strength around E. Dorset (7)
- Understanding French (7)
- In north, river is the place to grow rich (6)
- Producing dress-ring, she sought no company (5)

Atkinson offered Forest job

FOOTBALL

By JON CULLEY

NOTTINGHAM FOREST had already offered Ron Atkinson the manager's job at the City Ground before telling Dave Bassett he was sacked, it emerged last night.

Bassett, who had been in charge for 22 months, was dismissed yesterday morning as a result of Forest's 17-match run without a Premiership win and their exit from the FA Cup at the hands of Portsmouth on Saturday. He had been forewarned of his fate when he read the newspapers at home, but was not told officially until he arrived to take training.

The heavy-handed way in which his departure was handled provoked fury from the 54-year-old former Wimbledon and Sheffield United manager, even before Atkinson - on holiday in the Caribbean - admitted he had already been sounded out for the job.

Phil Soar, the Forest chief executive, said yesterday he was unaware of any contact between the club and the former Aston Villa and Sheffield Wednesday manager, although he confirmed Atkinson was a candidate. However, Atkinson, speaking on Central Television, said last night: "I was contacted on Monday. I said I would think about their offer and let them know within the week."

Bassett was scathing in his criticism of Forest's board of directors, branding them "rude and undignified". Bassett read of his impending dismissal in a

tabloid newspaper before he left his Sheffield home and heard the news confirmed on the radio. Only after he had arrived at the ground was he taken to one side by Soar and informed of the decision.

"When you get the sack it is always sad, but it is part and parcel of football," Bassett said. "I'm more upset about the way it has been done. I think the club have done it in an undignified manner. To read on the back pages that you are going to get the sack today and then it actually becomes a reality is not my way of doing business. In fact, it is a rather rude way of doing business. That disappoints me more than anything else."

"You can contrast it with when I got the sack from Elton John at Watford. On that occasion, we sorted the situation out, agreeing that while we were both upset, we realised why it had to happen. Then we had a glass of champagne and we remain friends."

Earlier, Soar had formally announced Bassett's departure by reading from what appeared to be the wrong club statement, having to correct himself after initially declaring that the parting of the ways had been "by mutual consent". Soar said that the board wished "sincerely to thank Dave for everything he has achieved with the club in the past two years."



Dave Bassett in grim mood at Forest yesterday

of that year, too late to prevent relegation to the First Division.

However, the following season Forest won the First Division championship, mainly thanks to 29 goals scored by the Dutch striker Pierre van Hooijdonk.

Forest have struggled to hold their own back in the Premiership, hampered by the sale of key players Kevin Campbell and Colin Cooper and, more significantly, by the one-man strike staged by Van Hooijdonk, who stayed away for three months in protest at what he saw as a lack of ambition on the board's part. After winning two of their opening three matches, against Coventry and Southampton, Forest have not managed another victory, establishing a Premiership record of 17 matches without a win.

Whether a new manager can turn Forest's fortunes around in the 18 matches left remains to be seen. But Geoff Thomas, the former England midfielder Bassett signed from Wolves, expressed doubts. "The way the lads have performed in some of the recent games - with the 2-2 draw against Aston Villa a good example - suggests there is not a lot wrong," he said. "But confidence is very fragile. It may be that a new man could give the team a lift, but Dave Bassett is one of the best motivators in the game and if he couldn't get any more out of the lads, you wonder who can."

Bassett the victim, page 23

WEDNESDAY REVIEW

COMMENT • FEATURES • ARTS • LISTINGS • TELEVISION



It was an intruder. It was a kidnapper. It was her mother. It was her brother.

Everyone has a theory about the murder of JonBenet Ramsey. Now, at last, America may discover the terrible truth

BY DAVID USBORNE

Investigators tracking the killer of six-year-old JonBenet Ramsey, the former child pageant queen from Boulder, Colorado, have never had much to work with. They do at least have the scribbled ransom note found in the home of her parents, Patsy and John Ramsey. Asking for \$118,000 for the little girl, the message included this warning to her father: "Don't try to grow a brain, John." There was no need for Mr Ramsey to agonise over the note. Hours after JonBenet was declared missing on 26 December 1996, he forced open a jammed door in the basement of the Tudor-style house and found the limp body of his daughter, bludgeoned, garrotted and possibly sexually molested. Two years later, no arrests have been made and people are wondering: is it the police who have failed to grow a brain?

This week, a grand jury, first assembled in Boulder last September to sift through what scant evidence there is, resumes its work after a month's break. This time the grand jury will not stop until it can do no more: either they will admit defeat and the JonBenet murder trail will be left to go cold, or charges will be filed and the way will be opened at last for a trial.

An entire nation is agog, and everyone has a dinner-table theory. Was the killer an unknown intruder, as Mr and Mrs Ramsey, through their lawyer, continue to insist? Or could JonBenet's elder brother, Burke, just nine at the time, have committed so heinous a crime? Or was it the parents – or just one of the parents – who smashed the skull of the former Little Miss Colorado and throttled her with the garrote? The couple now live 1,200 miles away in suburban Atlanta. As the only people identified by the Boulder authorities as under an "umbrella of suspicion", they know that their fates are in the balance. Both are expected to testify very soon before the grand jury, on the events of that night.

Few crimes this century, with the obvious exception of the trial of the football star O.J. Simpson, have so fascinated the American public. For two years, the story has been a front-cover staple of supermarket tabloids and news weeklies alike. Barely a night passes without haunting footage running on America's television screens of the peppy tot, all golden hair and sparkling eyes, treading the stage on the junior pageant circuit. Whole continents of the Internet are dedicated to web pages on the mystery.

At the heart of the media coverage is one constant theme: a frenzy of criticism of the Boulder police and the city's beleaguered district attorney, Alex Hunter. Bumbled detective work in the investigation's first hours created an image of the Boulder police team as clones of the Keystone Cops. So, too, did a string of angry resignations in Hunter's police team last year. Above all are the suspicions that, because of their wealth and high standing in Boulder society, the Ramseys have received kid-glove treatment. John Ramsey, 55, made a personal fortune when several years ago he sold a computer business, and is now building another computer company in Atlanta. Patsy Ramsey, 41, is herself a former beauty queen from West Virginia. Together the couple seemed to represent the quintessential American success story, with a happy home and a prosperous bank account.

Typical of the popular mistrust was this observation from Dave Ruby, an apprentice carpenter, made to me over coffee in Boulder's trendy Russian Tea Room on a recent afternoon: "This has been swept under the carpet. These were people who lived up on the hill; no one wants to touch them". Never mind that unsolved homicides in the United States are hardly rare. Indeed, roughly one-third of the murders in this country in any average year slip between the cracks of the justice system without so much as a single arrest being made. (In England and Wales the figure is 9 per cent.) This has as much to do with politics as with forensic methods. District attorneys in general are reluctant to press charges unless they are confident the case will fly before a jury. They would rather let a case drop than risk an acquittal and a black mark against their record.

But this case is different: the public has grown to know JonBenet almost as an additional family member in its collective front room, and it wants her killer found, tried and delivered to punishment. With the criticism of Hunter and the police, however, also comes widespread pessimism that that day of judgement will ever arrive. "This case seems almost frozen in time," Craig Silverman, a former Denver prosecutor, remarked last week. "All we know is that she was killed, and that a killer is on the loose. Usually, when a child killer is at large, there is a sense of urgency."

Even Henry Lee, a nationally renowned forensic expert who is serving as an adviser to Hunter, offers little hope. "We don't have much information from the witnesses. We don't have a major piece of physical evidence yet. Also, we don't have that much luck yet," he commented recently. "That's why it's extremely difficult."

Indeed, there have been setbacks from the outset. The last time the Ramseys saw their daughter alive, according to their version of events, was when she went to bed on Christmas Day, filled with excitement over the silver bicycle given to her by her parents. At 5.30am on Boxing Day, Patsy Ramsey rose from her bed and went downstairs to make coffee. She found the ransom note on the back stairs of the house, telling her that her daughter had been kidnapped and demanding the money. After waking her husband, Mrs Ramsey alerted the police. Officers soon arrived at the house, but it was only eight hours later, at about 2pm, that Mr Ramsey, after a long search through the house, found the little girl's body behind the basement door. The body remained in the house until 10.45pm that evening, when it was removed by staff from the Boulder County Coroner's Office.

Allowing Mr Ramsey to tramp through the house in search of JonBenet, and indeed to handle the body of his daughter, was the first and possibly the most serious of the mistakes committed by detectives, all from a police department that had not had to deal with a homicide in Boulder for several years. Other friends were also allowed to wander through the Ramsey home that day. That alone will be manna to the defence, should the case ever come to trial. When Boulder's police chief Tom Koby withdrew as head of the investigation in October 1997, he acknowledged that errors had been made. "If we had it to do all over again, we would do it differently," he said.

Joseph Wambaugh, the crime novelist, who is a former detective

himself, noted another lapse in basic police conduct in an interview last month with *People* magazine – the failure of the detectives, when they arrived at the Ramsey house, to separate Patsy and John Ramsey and to question them individually. This gave them ample opportunity to co-ordinate their story. It was 30 April 1997 before the Ramseys finally submitted to a first round of formal interviews with investigators in Boulder. "It's police-school basics 101," Wambaugh commented. The problem, he said, is that "when police get involved in a case that involves wealthy, prominent people, they tend to panic." Then there is also the simple disadvantage of the passage of time. Statistically, most homicide puzzles are successfully solved within days of being committed. "As the case becomes colder, the chance is reduced," Mr Lee observed.

The *cul de sac* nature of the case was well illustrated by last summer's resignations. In August, Detective Steve Thomas walked out of the Boulder police department, noisily accusing Hunter of sabotaging the investigation by all but siding with Mr and Mrs Ramsey. A month later, Lou Smits, a veteran homicide detective brought out of retirement to assist with the investigation, also withdrew, declaring that the police were unfairly persecuting the bereaved parents and were blind to the possibility that the murderer might indeed have been an unidentified intruder. In his letter, he stated: "The Ramseys did not do it."

In a column last week in the *Denver Post*, Chuck Green, a journalist who has probably invested more ink in the story than anyone else in his profession, offered this grim observation. "If ever the public gets to fully view police conduct in the investigation and evidence in this case, it will be a sad and tragic portrait of police failures, political manoeuvring and family belligerence."

Mr Green is among those who hold little hope that charges will ever be brought. But so long as the grand jury is meeting, there must still be a chance. Indeed, it is impossible for us on the outside to know just what has been given to the jury members to consider. The few pieces of information in the public domain have come via unsecured leaks of doubtful reliability, mostly given to the Denver newspapers. It would seem, however, that some progress may have been made over recent months. The police have reportedly secured important DNA samples from the crime scene. We know that Mr and Mrs Ramsey have supplied investigators with samples of their own DNA. We are also told that investigators have secured four fibres found on the duct tape that was used to gag JonBenet, and that a match has been made between the fibres and the clothing worn by Patsy on the night of the murder. Also, laboratory work has enhanced the recording of Patsy Ramsey's first, frantic emergency call to the police, early on Boxing Day. It reportedly reveals the voice in the background to be that of her son, Burke, asking what was going on and being told firmly to return to his room. That, however, contradicts their original version of events. They said that Burke had remained asleep until the police arrived.

The key to the case, however, may yet lie with the ransom note, hurriedly written, later found to have been ripped from a pad in the Ramsey home. Running over three pages, it began: "Listen carefully. We are a group of individuals that represent a small foreign faction", and went on to demand the \$118,000 in ransom money from Mr Ramsey. If popular speculation as to the identity of the killer seems to focus on Patsy Ramsey, it is because of this note. The task of analysing it was eventually handed to a professor of English, Donald Fraser, the expert who unravelled the political columnist Joe Klein as author of the anonymous best-seller, *Primary Colors*. Fraser ruled out both John and Burke Ramsey as possible authors of the ransom note. He could not do the same for Patsy, however, telling investigators that while he could not definitively link it to her, it bore her "rhetorical stamp".

At last we can count in months, if not weeks, the time left before we know if the slaying of JonBenet will remain a mystery or whether her killer may be brought to justice. Either way, it will remain one of the most compelling tragedies in the annals of American crime. As well as our sadness for JonBenet, another emotion has surely coloured our response to this story: a revulsion, fuelled by that video footage shown over and over on TV, at the gruesome American tradition of child beauty pageants.

If you imagine that this tale might, at least, have led to the circuit's decline, think again. The number of entrants in the All-Star Kids pageant in Colorado in 1996, when JonBenet competed, stood at 15. Since her death, *People* magazine reports, it has jumped to nearly 50.

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Above: John and Patsy Ramsey appeal for help on TV, top: dead child beauty queen JonBenet Ramsey

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					FINANCE	

The historic euro

Sir: The great event of the New Year is the advent of the euro. As yet, the euro exists only electronically, as befits the dawn of the electronic age. This is an unparalleled venture, for eleven nations of Europe to share a common currency – perhaps of great historic significance, depending on whether the move can be sustained.

The UK stands on the sidelines, hoping in some measure to share the benefits, yet not to join. Eventually, the UK will have to join, or else remain a poor off-shore island. Others will then control the conditions for our joining.

It is true that economic interests and political strategies have motivated this revolutionary change. Yet there is a visionary element. So frequently in past times – not least in this dying century – the nations have been at war with one another; certainly national interests and differences will not die, but this unification does promise to guarantee peace. It will in future be too expensive for one European country to fight another.

With the spread of the electronic network, it is conceivable that there may one day be a global currency.

As an Englishman, I find a certain difficulty in thinking of myself as "British". I have no difficulty in thinking of myself as European. Over the past half-century my books have been translated into many European languages and published in many European capitals.

As soon as my children were portable, my wife and I took them far afield, to France, Germany, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Scandinavia. We had no difficulties, only education and education. How are we not Europeans?

Some of our national hesitation is due to xenophobia. Some to our links with the USA. But if we were a properly accredited member of the EU, our links with the USA would still work to our advantage.

It is frustrating to see this great movement taking shape and colour before our eyes, while we stand colourlessly on the brink, still as indecisive as we have been for years.
BRIAN WALDIS
Oxford

Sir: Hamish McRae claimed recently that the launch of the euro represented the first time a number of sovereign states had voluntarily abandoned their separate currencies and adopted a single currency.

Not so. In 19th-century Germany, prior to unification under Prussia, many of the sovereign states had their own currencies. These they voluntarily abandoned as the single market (Zollverein) developed, adopting instead the Prussian thaler as their single currency. Eurosceptics might take note that this failed to lead to political union, much to the disappointment of federalists and nationalists, because most states desired to retain their sovereignty. Indeed when in 1866 Prussia expelled Austria from Germany because she was the principal obstacle to political union, most German states sided with Austria despite their economic ties with Prussia.
M A LEES
Brighton, East Sussex

Sir: Christopher Johnson ("The last EMU before global union?" 4 January) has missed an outstanding example of a successful currency union: it is the pound.

The English and Scottish pounds used to be two separate currencies of widely different values. On the union of the crowns in 1603 they were locked into an exchange-rate mechanism. On the union of the parliaments in 1707 this was changed into a single currency. This year's events have shown that the single currency has done nothing to weaken Scottish sense of national identity.
EARL RUSSELL
House of Lords

Sir: Following the formation of the Axis pact in the late 1930s, some politically incorrect wit observed: "Serve Hitler right – we had the Italians last time!" This quotation springs to mind following the announcement that Lord Owen is to have a leading role in the anti-EMU campaign.
PHILIP GOLDENBERG
Liberal Democrats
Woking, Surrey

Fleeing Saddam

Sir: In the aftermath of the Desert Fox campaign over Iraq, I am reminded of those Iraqi refugees in the UK who have, for years, been talking about the brutal activities of that regime. The use of weapons of mass destruction, for example, was evident in the chemical attack on Iraqi Kurds in Halabja in March 1988, killing about 5,000 people and leaving many more injured or facing long-term health problems. Yet, from a country of more than 19 million people, there were only 1,075 asylum-seekers in 1997, of whom only 255 were initially granted refugee status (Home Office provisional figures).

This is a good opportunity to review current UK policies and practices. How well do they stand up to the tests posed by this regime?

Is everything possible being done in our foreign policy to discourage any regime from serious human rights violations (including a refusal to supply the

weapons being used in this process)? Is everything possible being done to support the appropriate international bodies (such as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees) in their efforts to offer assistance to all displaced people within or near to their country of origin?

Do we have an evidently fair and just system for assessing and judging asylum applications in the UK; does this operate to the same standards as the rest of British law (for example, attracting the same expertise in advocacy and in expert witness work) and offer both welfare with dignity and accessible medical support throughout this process?
A foreign policy informed by an

Sir: I congratulate you on your leader on 2 January: "Readers of *The Independent* ... are rational enough to be unimpressed by what is just a number and probably pedantic enough to know that the millennium does not begin until the end of the 20th year." At last a leading newspaper has had the courage to swim against the tide and acknowledge that insofar as the advent of the third millennium can be calculated at all, it certainly does not happen on 1 January 2000. Until now I had felt alone in my determination not to send

interest in human rights needs to be followed through in relation to policies for the victims of those human rights abuses.
Dr STUART TURNER
The Traumatic Stress Clinic
London W1

I won't freeze

Sir: In common with 8.4 million other old age pensioners I am about to receive a £20 winter fuel payment. I do not really need it and shall pass mine on.

I am not alone in having a generous occupational pension as well as my DSS pension, and I no longer have any dependants. I live in a small flat and my income is perfectly adequate to pay my fuel

bills. Government figures published last October show that in 1995/96 the top 20 per cent of pensioners lived in households where they enjoyed an average income of £22,000 a year. Why does the Government make fuel payments to people on incomes like ours? Because it would be very difficult and expensive to devise a way of targeting them which does not inadvertently cut out some who really need them.

I suggest that those of us who can manage without join me in passing over our payments to Age Concern or to Help the Aged, who can use the money to help the people for whom it is intended.
Professor WALTER ELKAN
London NW8

run out of diesel." He had. It took an hour or so, seated on a cold train, before a spare unit was sent from Doncaster to push us back.
RICHARD BUCKLEY
Thorpe Hesley, South Yorkshire

Sir: Now that New Labour has adopted the Tories' strongest policies Mr Hague is looking for new ideas (report, 1 January). Perhaps he should look at those policies discarded by Mr Blair: from each according to their ability and to each according to their need.
DAVID MALCOLM
Leicester

IN BRIEF

Happy New Millennium cards out next December.
HUGH ROGERS
Gravesend, Kent

Sir: The Virgin train that ran out of fuel isn't unprecedented. I was travelling on the last evening Northern Spirit train from Hull to Doncaster at the end of November, when, suddenly, after leaving Thorne, there was a "sound of silence" – no engines. The train rolled to a halt and the driver emerged to say, "I think I've

Yemen warnings

Sir: The issue of blame for the deaths of the hostages in Yemen will be debated for some time, but we were somewhat alarmed by the inference in your leading article on 1 January that the tourists themselves had some responsibility for what happened: "Given the past history of Yemeni hostage-taking, the tourists must have known they were taking risks".

We have travelled on a number of occasions with their tour company, but we were fortunate enough to have chosen a different one for our trip to Yemen over the Christmas period. In our experience such travel operators (and invariably their clients as well) act with utmost care and are as well informed on local conditions as possible.

This group were undoubtedly as fully aware as we were that there was a very small risk of kidnapping but that no foreign tourist had yet been physically harmed by their captors. What happened in the latest incident was very different from previous events.

Neither they nor their tour operator were being foolhardy. They acted in line with all known information and advice, the most important source being the Foreign Office.

IAN BAILEY
LOUISE TURNER
Halifax, West Yorkshire

Term-time holidays

Sir: However much I sympathise with Marian McCain's splendid defence (letter, 1 January) of the educational and cultural benefits of taking her children out of school for a three-month tour of Europe in 1977, I'm afraid the argument doesn't stand up 22 years later.

Any schoolchild's absence over and above the statutory 10 days of family holiday is now registered as unauthorised absence, published in league tables and interpreted by the public as "truancy rate". In addition, children on holiday during SATs can artificially depress the school's scores, which are also published in league tables.

It is unfair to accuse the National Association of Head Teachers of preferring their pupils to be "manacled to their desks"; they are only trying to make a crude league table system work. Perhaps the time is approaching for a more enlightened definition of what constitutes "education" to be seriously debated, together with a vigorous attack on the causes of genuine truancy.
BARBARA POINTON
Thriplow, Cambridgeshire

Sir: Parents who take their children out of school for holidays in term-time are downgrading the importance of school in their children's eyes. They clearly feel that it is more important for them to have a cheaper holiday than to support the teachers in educating their children.

Until parents stop putting holidays before education in schools, we will not develop the sort of positive culture of education that our society needs. Marian McCain's sarcastic hyperbole that "teachers would prefer children to be manacled to their desks" shows how out of touch she is with reality.
J M DAVIES
Halberton, Devon

Sir: Marian McCain has a quarter of the school year to take her children on "educational" holidays and all the recreations she feels are much better than the "grim" national curriculum. Teachers, mostly, work hard to impart the national curriculum to our offspring. They do this by finely balanced timetabling and regular pupil attendance. To deliberately wreck such planning seems selfish.
CATHERINE BRIAN
Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire

Sir: If only it were true that children absent from school during term-time were visiting the Parthenon or doing the worthwhile activities mentioned in Marian McCain's letter. Unfortunately, most experience the "culture" of Disney (Paris or Florida) because fares and tariffs are so much cheaper out of the holiday season.
DOROTHY PAINE
Petcham, Surrey

Sir: There is no proof that increasing teaching time will improve exam results. Private schools have always had longer holidays and better results.
CLARE LUBIN
London N3

Cornish wowsers

Sir: Len Clarke (letter, 1 January) asserts that the word "wowsers" is of Australian origin.

As a child in west Cornwall, in the 1930s, I knew perfectly well the meaning of a "Methodist wowsers". As it was widely used among the older generation I imagine it is a 19th century word, or earlier. With so many Cornish emigrating to Australia then, no need to ask how "wowsers" became part of Australia's vocabulary, along with many other words of Cornish origin.

The meaning "killjoy" is an obvious derivation from a word's use to describe someone who would forbid not only newspapers but games or music on a Sunday and alcohol (in Australia) on any day of the week.
NICK THOMAS
Halifax, West Yorkshire

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Welsh Portraits No 3: A sea angler sets up his rod on Pendine Sands. These miles of sandy beach on Carmarthen Bay have been the setting for a number of attempts on the world land-speed record
Geraint Lewis

At last, the truth about the alphabet has come to me

LAST WEEK I referred in a column to the comic alphabet taught me by my father which starts "Ay for Orses, Beef or Mutton. Cephos Salt, Deferential..." and then asked if any readers could help fill in the gaps in my memory.

I should have known better. I have been deluged by a hundred or more letters on the subject, some didactic but most written by people who had been told the alphabet by their father or mother, or colleagues in the forces, and triggered off by my remarks into a fit of nostalgia.

Luckily, one of the letters was just plain helpful. It came from proof-reader and copy editor Simon Adams, and said: "You need no website. David Crystal's *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language* makes mention of

several comic alphabets, but he himself is dependent on Eric Partridge's *Comic Alphabets* (1961)..."

It was followed through the post by a letter from none other than David Crystal himself, summarising the history of the comic alphabet for me (following Eric Partridge) and then, from a kind Mr Godden in Bristol, a loan copy of Mr Partridge's now hard-to-find book, which I devoured.

So whereas last week I was floundering in the dark, I am suddenly in possession of knowledge and can tell you that this alphabet grew from larking around in the Great War among signallers but was first formalised by a comic duo called Clapham and Dwyer in about 1929 in a BBC broadcast.

When Partridge went to the BBC to have a look at the original

script of Clapham and Dwyer's broadcast in the archives he was told that all the material had been destroyed by enemy action in the Second World War, which makes it sound as if Hitler had personally given orders for this alphabet to be eliminated. But Partridge was able to piece together more or less the original alphabet from stuff published in the 1930s, and prints various versions of it.

He is the first to say, and I am the first to agree, that there is no authentic version of this alphabet. Like a lot of folk art, it changes with the period and with the performer. And, I may say, with the reader's letter, so without further ado, I am going to follow your suggestions through the alphabet and let you choose your preferred version.
A. Not much variation here.



MILES KINGTON
Whereas last week I was floundering in the dark, I am suddenly in possession of knowledge

Everyone liked "Ay for Orses" except for a brave few who preferred "Ava Gardner".

B. "Beef or mutton" was the clear favourite here. Nobody liked my "beef or lamb", thinking it was far too modern. Other ideas which cropped up were "Beaverbrook", "bee for honey", "beef or mince", "before my time" and "B for Hugo". Before you go, I guess, I did, however, invent one myself here, which I was very proud of. "B for castle". Get it? "Belvoir Castle". Well, never mind.

C. Nobody liked my "Cephos Salt" either. The clear leader was "Seaforth Highlanders", though "C for yourself" was quite popular.

D. I couldn't detect a clear swing here. I was offered Differential, Deferential, D for Kate, Deaf or dumb, D for glory, Defer Payments, and Dee for Salmon. Several people insisted that Deaf or dumb was all right, because "deaf" was pronounced "deef" in the North-east, and I bet it is.

E. Eve or Adam, Eva Bartok, 'Eave a brick, Ether gas, Evolution, Eva Peron, Eva Braun, Eave oh, my hearties. I am not sure I like any of them terribly, but there they are.

F. "Effervescence" seemed the clear favourite, though "efflorescence" cropped up quite a lot. "F for lasting" was suggested. So was "F for green", which I didn't understand until I spoke it out loud and got "evergreen".

G. Apparently, quite a lot of your parents got round the letter G by using it as a mild expletive. "Gee, for Gosh sake!", "Gee, forget it!", "Gee for crying out loud!" were all popular. Clapham and Dwyer's version, it seems, was "G for y Toyne" which is incomprehensible

to you learn that Geoffrey Toye was an impresario of the time. Still pretty feeble, though. The best one by far, as most of you agreed was "G for police" (Chief of Police). One or two tried "Jeffer Screepers". I wish you hadn't.

H. A lot of versions of the letter H turned on the fact that "aitch" sounds like "age". So I was offered "H for consent", "H for retirement", and so on. The best of these, possibly, was "H for beauty". Other versions heard H more like "ache" or "itch". Mr Stabb wrote from Cornwall to say that in a Cornish accent "Aitch for Scratching" was quite all right. But I think the best was "H for Himself" (occasionally followed by "and run like mad").

Good heavens, I've run out of space. Second half of the alphabet tomorrow.

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We must pay up to prevent the decline of our health service

ON THE face of it, winter seems to have cast the National Health Service back into a near-constant state of collapse. Over the weekend, incredibly, there were just 20 intensive care beds available in the whole of England; as a result, a number of distressing stories have emerged, from pensioners left on trolleys in corridors to patients being treated in ambulances because of lack of hospital space.

There is an outbreak of flu putting extra pressure on resources, but there is such an outbreak every few years, and the NHS ought to be able to cope. Neither is this outbreak particularly bad; the number of flu cases was much higher in 1995. The fact that the NHS is struggling is evidence of a deeper malaise. Most noticeably, a lack of nurses means that many beds that are physically available cannot be used to treat patients.

Overall, Britain has one of the most efficient health sectors in the world. The very fact that it operates at the limit of its abilities shows that it is using its resources to the full. For every penny we spend on health, we get better value for money than almost any other country. Labour has also copied the Tories by increasing spending in real terms, with the summer's Comprehensive Spending Review granting the NHS an extremely generous £2.1bn over three years.

The British public has at successive elections shown itself reluctant to pay more in taxes, and alternative social insurance systems may do no better. Even in the US, where citizens clamour for the best-quality products from every industry, "managed health care" is the fashion. Americans found that their economy was not strong enough to sustain uncontrolled health spending.

The NHS does not usually fail to treat those who are acutely ill. Its worst failings show up elsewhere, in the shoddiness of treatment of the chronically ill, whether that means the condition of the crumbling buildings or the wait to be treated. It is a scandal that patients are still subjected to the indignities of mixed-sex wards. Old buildings, even at such world-renowned centres as Great Ormond Street, Harefield and the Royal Marsden, cost more to run, more to heat, and are less accommodating to new practices and efficient delivery of care than newer hospitals.

These problems may get worse. Cost inflation in health services, which have continually to match the advent of new drugs and life-saving technology, runs far above that in the rest of the economy. This makes it impossible to keep up with demand without increasing the numbers of trained staff and advanced facilities. The present shortage of useful bed space - flu epidemic or no flu epidemic - is a sign that the time for this has come. New Labour speaks of hard choices; this will be one of them.



A touch of magic where it's needed

TONY BLAIR today joins the hundreds of world leaders who have jetted into Pretoria to get a bit of what the South Africans call the *madiba* magic ("father" magic), a part of that peculiar charisma bestowed on all who meet him by President Nelson Mandela. Blair, more than most, needs it. He will return this weekend to a Westminster where his reputation for touch has been badly dented by scandal, cabinet squabbles and European rifts.

It would none the less be wrong to dismiss his trip as a bit of glitter-seeking. Anglo-South-African relations remain critical for both sides, for Britain for reasons of exports and for South Africa for reasons of inward investment. Both of these need more than a handshake and some meaningless rhetoric at the moment. Despite all the

problems, Mandela's personality, his "goodness," has kept him above the international setbacks, and the disappointments, of post-apartheid Africa.

But the concerns are there and are growing. Business confidence has been corroded by internal political divisions within the government and by suspicions that Mandela's expected successor, Thabo Mbeki, and a substantial body of the African National Congress leadership would like to row back from the free market reforms introduced by Mandela. Optimism has also been shaken by the level of violence experienced in the urban centres.

Mandela has recently complained that white commitment has been too little and too shallow. And he has a point. South Africa of all countries needs and deserves investment for the long haul from the outside and co-operative belief on the inside. But in return the Pretoria government has to give more reassurance than it has so far that Mandela's retirement later this year will not see a return to a more restrictive economic policy.

Stop the ghost of Old Labour from clambering out of its tomb

IT IS not the departure from Government of Peter Mandelson that poses most danger to Tony Blair, but the burning triumphalism at his fall among people who are supposed to be on the same side of the political fence. Sizeable chunks of the Labour Party, from the constituencies to the Cabinet, are crowing indecently at Mr Mandelson's fate and the setback to the ambitions of New Labour.

It is natural to feel a quiver of malicious pleasure when we discover that someone who lectured others about self-discipline has failed to meet his own high standards. Fine: got that over with. But within the Government and its periphery, the blood-letting continues unabated. The smears and counter-smears spread. As Tom Robinson once sang in a rather different context: "Forget the oppression from everywhere else while we still do a wonderful job oppressing ourselves."

The epidemic of generalised ill-will represents a lapse into Labour's worst vice, namely the assumption that the natural state of the party is to be a mass of seething factional resentments. Don't these people want the Government to prosper? On their own terms, they have reason to be happy with its performance. The public spending review committed substantial amounts for health and education. The more pessimistic among us would argue that they erred on the incautious side and that these areas need reform before expenditure, rather than the other way round. But that is no problem for Old Labour critics of Tony Blair who

love public spending on principle. Within two years of taking power, they have all the constitutional reform their hearts could desire, including the dismemberment of their ancestral enemy, the House of Lords. The minimum wage is in place, as is legislation bolstering union recognition. But, like the Judean in *Monty Python's Life of Brian* who wants to know what the Romans have done for him - apart from the roads, the aqueducts and the clean water - they are cross because it wasn't their brand of Labour that made the radical changes.

These people will not rest content until the Labour Party is unpopular again. They are too bound up in their tribal *Bruderdum* to see that the Blair Government has made irreversible changes to Britain and was able to do so only because it had most of the country, and not just the die-hard Labour parts of it, on its side.

But even before Mandycate struck, Old Labour was trying to clamber out of the tomb. Its central claim is that John Smith would have won the 1997 election without the reforms demanded by Mr Blair. This argument holds that New Labour was never really necessary and that the party has sold its soul for nothing. I remember the soul of the Old Labour Party, as it happens. It consisted of a machinery understood by the few not the many and an unspecified but robust sense of grievance, underpinned by class resentment. It was riven with distrust and dominated by trade union cliques. It let in Margaret Thatcher in 1979 and took 18 years to get rid of her party.



ANNE MCELVOY

My concern about this government is not that it is betraying its totems, but that it clings to too many

In the *New Statesman*, the Labour biographer Francis Beckett has argued that Mr Smith's shadow budget was not a significant factor in losing the 1992 election. He believes that because Labour had stated two years earlier that it would raise the top tax bracket to 50 per cent, the electorate had got used to the idea and so it couldn't have been the "tax bombshell" wot lost it.

Oh but it was, Mr Beckett. If you doubt me, listen to Maurice Saatchi who was running the Conservatives' ad campaign: "The Tories only had one weapon - tax - and Labour gave it to them." Two years before polling day, voters are little bothered by the plans of politicians. Shortly before an election, they ponder what it all means and vote accordingly. Mr Smith was a kind man to his many friends in pol-

itics. He completed the structural reform of One Member, One Vote. But he failed to take seriously enough the sensibilities of moderately affluent (and aspirant) voters if Labour were to win power. His instinct was always to strengthen Labour in its heartlands, not to turn Conservative voters into Labour ones.

Blairite converts, according to Roy Hattersley in *The Guardian*, merely "topped up Labour's plurality and turned inevitable victory into a landslide." I like the "inevitable". The only thing that was inevitable about the Labour Party for most of my adult life was that it always managed to lose.

Mr Hattersley then accuses the Blairites of callousness towards the poor because they believe the problem of poverty cannot be redressed solely by throwing money at it.

At the level of childish simplicity, Mr Hattersley is right. If you gave poor people more money, they would not be so poor. It would not, however, answer the question of why so many people lead deprived lives, regardless of who is in government and how many benefit increases are made. *Cathy Come Home*, the film that awakened middle England to the terrifying ease with which ordinary people can join the ranks of the homeless, describes a period when Old Labour was in power.

We don't yet know whether the Government's Social Exclusion Unit, lavishly mocked by Mr Hattersley, will make enough of a difference to count as a real improvement. But its existence shows that this govern-

ment takes seriously the need to examine why poverty arises and persists, rather than taking the easy way out and unleashing Mr Hattersley's recommended "bombardment of £5 notes".

Vast sums of public money have been poured into the worst council estates down the years by all governments, and the results are negligible. Poverty of expectation has not decreased, despite the introduction of the comprehensive schools that Mr Hattersley defends. Yet our state school system is culpably inefficient at raising the horizons of low- and middle-ability children. The NHS offers the illusion of equal access, accompanied by a crisis in recruitment and a bed shortage when the flu strikes. Tell the pensioner gasping for breath on a trolley in a corridor that the NHS does not need reform because it's free.

My concern about this government is not that it is betraying its Old Labour totems, but that it clings to too many of them. Behind the shiny rhetoric, its radical edge has blunted. Further controversial decisions are postponed until "the second term" - the political equivalent of Narnia.

Never mind Euan and Kathryn Blair missing a day's school. It is their father's absence that matters. His unruly Westminster class badly needs him. Yesterday, he dined in South Africa with the outgoing President Mandela. If he does not hasten back to the more mundane business of restoring order at home, he may find that his own wind of change has blown itself out.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The proposed confiscation of land is reminiscent of what occurred in the Soviet Union."
Murdo Fraser, Conservative spokesman, on the proposed Scottish land reforms

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The obscurest epoch is today."
Robert Louis Stevenson, writer



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THE IMPEACHMENT of President Clinton looms in the Senate like a mudslide blocking California's coastal Highway 1. Traffic won't move until it is removed. We want fast action by the Senate. And a fair trial for the President. And respect for the process, in a way that sets sound precedent. Perhaps this is akin to asking someone to walk and chew gum and juggle knives at the same time. It's not easy. But it's not impossible. San Jose Mercury News

THE BEST option is to pass a bill stripping Clinton of his pension and his expense allowance after he leaves office. Leaving him to fend for himself, with only Secret Service protection provided by the taxpayers, would be a fitting punishment for the first president since Gerald Ford not to rate millionaire status. While Congress cannot fine Clinton, it can pass any law it wishes relative to his pension and expense allocation. A punishment of this magni-

tude would meet the demands of the public, and would even appease those members of the right who still retain their sanity. (Dick Morris) The New York Post

MONITOR

ALL THE NEWS OF THE WORLD
US comment on the impeachment of President Clinton

NEXT TO President Clinton, Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott faces the greatest risk, once the upper chamber considers the articles of impeachment that the House of

Representatives approved last month. The public does not appear hungry for a long, tedious trial. But history will still judge Mr Lott about how thoroughly the Senate conducts only the second impeachment trial of an American president. Dallas Morning News

ASA matter of practical politics, the continuation of this impeachment business looks like a loser for all concerned. What began with the vulgar and

tawdry and embarrassing has become one of the great political collisions of our history.

The problem is that, for generations, people are going to be looking back and assessing the actions of our public figures and politicians in the winter of 1998-99, asking whether they delivered on their solemn oath to "do impartial justice". If that gives pause, maybe it's because it ought to. (Tob Lindberg) The Washington Times

PANDORA

IS PETER Mandelson to be offered a column with *The Guardian*? Following a tip that the former trade secretary was about to find some gainful employment (other than being an MP of course) Pandora rang *The Guardian*. A spokeswoman for the editor, Alan Rusbridger, declined to comment, besides saying that she could neither confirm nor deny the story. Meanwhile, Peter was incommunicado. If he is about to put pen to paper for *The Guardian*, he would surely hope to have a longer shelf life than Derek Draper, his former employee, did at *The Daily Telegraph* after his fall from grace.

WHEN BARBRA Streisand enters the next millennium she will also enter the history books. Streisand has been offered "an eight-figure sum" to sing at the MGM-Grand Hotel in Las Vegas next New Year's Eve. Fans were expecting to see the singer at Madison Square Garden, in New York, for the millennium celebrations, but she has a "soft spot" for Las Vegas, according to a report in the *New York Post*. If Babs is going to get that kind of money, described as "a fee far greater than has ever been paid to any artist anywhere for a performance", she certainly won't go short of gambling chips after the show.

THE AMBITION of Alun Michael, the Welsh Secretary, to become the prospective Labour leader in the Welsh National Assembly has forced the rearrangement of his son's wedding. The result of the contest between Michael and Rhodri Morgan, the Cardiff West MP, is to be declared on 20 February – the preferred date for Michael's son, Tai, to marry his fiancée, Mary. "We wanted to avoid a clash," Michael told the *Western Mail*. The wedding will now take place a week later. "I hope to have two enjoyable weekends on the trot," the Welsh Secretary added. Unfortunately for Michael, many of those who do know of any just impediment as to why he should not be Labour leader in the assembly have already spoken.

AN EXPOSE of the Clintons' marriage is to be published in the May issue of *Vanity Fair*. Many of the juicier details arising from Gail Sheehy's epic account concern



Blair's Government may be about to offer the Liberal Democrats civil service help and access to confidential documents. Pandora wonders if this is the hardware side of the deal.

Hillary herself. Hillary's mother, Dorothy Rodham, who apparently fills her time listening to right-wing radio in her Little Rock condominium, tells Sheehy that she and Hillary "don't sit down and have those mother-daughter discussions". Such sobriety may explain Hillary's habit of imposing a "PG" rating on all news given to her by her staff. In the article, Betsey Wright, the former chief of staff to President Clinton, explains that Hillary receives "no sex, no late-night talk-show jibes, no facts about the scandal that might distress or distract her", adding that Hillary "is probably the only person in America you could tell a cigar joke to and she wouldn't get it".

WORDS MAY come back to haunt ex-wrestler Jesse "The Body" Ventura (pictured) who was sworn in as Governor of Minnesota on Monday. At the ceremony, Ventura was glowingly endorsed by Arnold Schwarzenegger, who co-starred with the new Governor in the film *Predator*. However, had Schwarzenegger read the remarks that Ventura has made about him in the forthcoming issue of the magazine *USA Weekend*, he might have preferred to bite his lip. Jesse doesn't seem to think that Arnie should follow his path into politics, saying that the muscle man actor wouldn't make a good president and adding: "Arnold's real interests are making movies and money. He probably has political interests because he sees how much money he pays in taxes."

WHEN EARL Russell, the Liberal Democrat peer, received a letter from a company offering some preferential rates on photocopies and fax machines, he knew something was up. Close scrutiny revealed that the offer was from Greg Downer, the Labour Party account manager at Ilex Office Systems, who added that equipment could be supplied to 10 Downing Street, Millbank Tower and the House of Commons. Russell puts it down to computer incompetence, but with reports that Tony

Why are we rock fans treated so badly?



DAVID LISTER

It's long ceased to be the sole province of the young; people now watch Oasis and Pulp 'en famille'

THIS COUNTRY has a Prime Minister who once played in a rock band. That perhaps goes some way to explaining why next week a government-appointed body will meet to discuss the state of live music.

Unfortunately, the Music Industry Forum, which includes the rock star Mick Hucknall, will focus on the situation for bands, promoters and managers. If we had a Prime Minister or a Culture Secretary who regularly attended rock concerts, I suspect the focus of the report would be rather different. For the one art form where it is seen as *de rigueur* to treat audiences badly, make booking tickets a nightmare and downplay such incidents as being able to see and hear properly, is the rock concert.

Two generations have now grown up reared on rock music and regard going to see a band just like going to an opera or theatre. But the big rock concert promoters clearly think back to their own youths, mud-splattered Glastonbury festivals and spaced-out afternoons at the Roundhouse, as the benchmark for how to enjoy live music.

However, rock music has long

since ceased to be the sole province of the young. Thirty, 40, and 50-somethings go to rock concerts just as they do to operas. People watch not just the Spice Girls but also Oasis and Pulp *en famille*.

Though "watch" can be an exaggeration. How often at a rock concert can you really see and hear properly? Most concerts at places such as Wembley have unfired

seating in front of the stage; and when people stand up – in other words within 30 seconds of the concert starting – those under 6ft tall see no more of the show.

Even more annoying are the enforced and totally unnecessary delays to the start of every rock concert. You stand sardine-style in sweltering conditions for an hour watching roadies touch amplifiers and gaze intently at wires – I mean what do they actually do that couldn't have been done during the afternoon? Starting times on the tickets bear no relation to the real start time. Yet if you ring up the venue and use an in-phrase (such as "give me the running order") you will find that it is known, precisely, to the minute, when the group comes on and off stage. Those supposedly spontaneous encores are in fact planned to the last detail.

Why, also, is rock the one entertainment where it is considered pedantic to want to know where you are sitting when you buy your ticket? Venues often will inform you only of the price range. The row itself is a nice, or more often nasty, surprise on the night.

Promoters are, of course, not helped by the choice of venues. It is quite incredible that while we can be said to have led the world in rock music since 1963, Britain does not possess one purpose-built rock venue. Just as incredible is the fact that while hundreds of millions of pounds are going from the national lottery to build new museums, new theatres and new opera houses, not a penny of lottery money has been earmarked for a rock venue.

Our most famous venue for rock concerts is Wembley, a place built as a swimming-pool, then used for ice-skating, where now most of the seats do not even face the stage. The one area of the venue where you can see and hear well is well-nigh impossible to book. It is reserved for record company staff and other guests (and, of course, the critics, many of whom would do well to re-view concerts from the sight- and sound-impaired standpoint of most of the audience).

Wembley is not alone. In the rest of the country many venues are also converted sports halls or shed-like, soulless barns. Real atmospheric rock venues, such as the much

lamented Rainbow in London, are now long gone.

I would like to suggest a rock concert code of practice, which would include the phone number of a complaints hotline printed on the back of every ticket. In one court case where fans did bring a complaint, the judge ruled against the rock fans as they had not made their complaint on the night of the concert. (If he had been to a rock concert himself, he would know that is virtually impossible in the frenetic atmosphere of a show.)

Above all, what we need are purpose-built venues with comfortable seating upstairs and a dance floor in front of the stage for those who wish to stand or gyrate to the music. The Empire in London's Shepherd's Bush comes closest to this. But it should be the norm. Every big city should have a proper rock venue, with a main house for big gigs and a smaller space for more intimate concerts. The venues could also start treating their customers like grown-ups.

I know, it's only rock'n'roll. But we shouldn't have to suffer to watch it.

These spin doctors thrive in our backstabbing culture



KEN LIVINGSTONE

Peter Mandelson always saw his job as promoting the leader of the Labour Party, not the party itself

WHEN PARLIAMENT reconvenes next Monday, it won't be very long before somebody blames me for the Charlie Whelan affair. Every now and then in recent years, some old Labour lag has blamed me for the Labour Party's obsession with polling, advertising and spin-doctoring. They point out that it was the GLC's high-profile campaign against abortion that broke Labour's long-standing hostility to the use of polling and advertising.

"Spin doctor" is a relatively new term for an old trade, but it also represents a change in the traditional role of the press officer. My earliest memory of the term came during the American presidential election of 1988, when, after the first Bush vs Dukakis debate, both candidates' press officers descended on the waiting press corps to put their "spin" on how the debate had gone.

It's not so long ago that press officers' role was little more than that of providing information and relatively bland press releases. Government and councils had their press officers but they were specifically barred from performing any political role. It was not until the February 1974 Labour government started appointing policy advisers that we first saw the appearance of these strange new hybrid figures, paid for by the taxpayer but serving a purely party interest.

At the start of that brief, shining high point of human civilisation, otherwise known as the Labour GLC administration of 1981-86, I realised we would need somebody who could explain to journalists what the new Labour administration was doing. The traditional career local government officers who filled the press office specifically did not wish to get involved in explaining what was going on inside the administration before policy had been

agreed. We decided to allow each of the main party groupings to appoint a press officer, and the Labour Party HQ let us poach Veronica Crichton from the press office.

Veronica had been seconded to help the London Labour Party during the GLC election campaign, and I was impressed by her direct and blunt manner. When I asked what she thought about the coming contest between myself and Andrew McIntosh for leadership of the Labour Group, she replied that it was regrettable that such an important post had such a limited pool of talent to choose from. In accepting the post she made it clear that she would not lie on behalf of the Labour Group because that would compromise her professional reputation.

She was an immediate success with journalists, who rapidly realised that her briefings were accurate and impartial. She also recognised that her duty was to the Labour group as a whole, and was never guilty of unattributable rubbishing of those members of the Labour Group who happened to disagree with me.

The problem with the growth of the spin-doctoring industry is that the practitioners have come to identify too closely with the individual they are serving. No one is more to blame for this than Peter Mandelson himself. Peter always saw his role as promoting the leader of the Labour Party rather than the party itself. Unlike Veronica Crichton he almost seemed to relish getting involved in internal party fights, even though he was the Campaigns and Communications Officer for the Labour Party collectively.

My first experience of being on the receiving end of Peter's spin-doctoring came when I stood for election to Labour's NEC in 1987. Peter was strongly pushing Bryan Gould for the vacant seat on the NEC, and throughout the summer a series of anonymous briefings appeared posing the contest as a straightforward battle between Bryan and myself. Whenever Bryan and I met at meetings he expressed surprise that the media were reporting the contest in this way, because there were in fact a score of candidates chasing the seven places.

As Bryan put it (and as, in fact, happened in the election) "I wouldn't be at all surprised if both of us got elected". Of course, Peter had tried to portray the issue as a struggle between Bryan and me, because even then it fitted his own agenda of rubbishing "old" Labour's traditions and personalities – Bryan was seen as a "moderniser".

Ironically, because of Peter's briefing, my election was seen as a major defeat for Neil Kinnock. Of course, Bryan and myself broadly agreed on the value of Keynesian economic policy and eventually the Labour leadership decided to dispense with his services after he was found guilty of being caught in possession of an independent mind.



Gordon Brown with his ex-press officer, Charlie Whelan

Once elected, I decided that I would treat NEC proceedings as confidential, and would not answer questions from journalists as I left the meetings. I soon discovered, however, that after every meeting Peter was briefing the press on how Neil Kinnock had demolished his left wing opponents.

I wouldn't have minded if Peter, as a paid party official, was giving an impartial account of the meetings, but often his report to the journalists was not just partisan, but frankly inaccurate to the point of dishonesty.

After several months I decided that I would put my own side of the story to journalists, only to discover that junior Labour Party press officers had been instructed to follow me and Dennis Skinner in order to eavesdrop on what we were saying. They always looked a bit ashamed of their behaviour and, as supposedly impartial party officials, they did indeed have something to be ashamed about. This was not what Labour Party members paid their salaries for.

There was a brief respite from

this pattern of negative briefing against colleagues while John Smith was leader of the Labour Party, but with Peter Mandelson's return to the inner circle, matters worsened.

It's not surprising, therefore, that Gordon Brown felt he needed his own spin doctor: both to watch his back and to deal with critics.

The problem for the Labour Party, as this climate of backstabbing between powerful barons escalated, was that the very real achievements of the Labour government were often pushed on to the back pages, while the headlines were dominated by the outpourings of the spin doctors. People applying to work for Gordon Brown and Tony Blair tended to complain that they were being asked "what can you do for Gordon?" or "what can you do for Tony?"

I conclude this first Charlie Whelan Annual Memorial Column with the hope that all these highly paid young men and women might start asking themselves another question: "What can I do for the Labour government as a whole?"

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Don't hold back the disabled

ALTHOUGH SOCIETY is increasingly adapting itself to the needs of people with physical differences, it is still, very much, geared to non-disabled people. Furthermore, disabled people still tend to be perceived as low achievers, which could explain the high rate of underemployment among this minority group.

However, the prejudices of negative expectations that society holds of disabled people may, in itself, be an incentive to strive towards career success. The interpersonal competition of trying to gain the approval of others or of avoiding social segregation has been argued to be a significant cause of motivation. Furthermore, career striving represents a major means of obtaining self-esteem.

This research addresses the issue of what success means to 14 professional males who have physical disabilities, the causal attributions to each individual's career success and whether there are any significant differences between people with congenital disabilities and people with acquired disabilities. A further

focus is on how the concept of success was defined to the participants when they were children.

For the purposes of this study, an individual's career is deemed to be "successful" if his or her occupational status is professional.

The sample was initially identified via well established disability organisations, registered charities, media channels and networks in different regions of the country. Potential participants were selected on the basis of the following principles: they are employed in a high-status profession with a significant degree of authority, autonomy or power to make judgements; they have reached personally desirable positions of power, wealth or prestige in their professions; and they have a congenital or acquired physical disability that influences their mobility, dexterity or speech (typical disabilities include cerebral palsy, paraplegia and thalidomide).

The research findings suggest that, for these disabled professionals, the notion of success is construed primarily in terms of internal criteria which cannot be measured



PODIUM

SONALI SHAH
From a paper to a British Psychological Society conference by a Loughborough University researcher

objectively. Six of the 14 men responded along the lines of "success, for me, is being happy in what I'm doing", or "achieving some kind of personal satisfaction".

However, while internal criteria were an exceedingly important part of all the individuals' conceptions of career success, external criteria such as career progression and material wealth were identified as significant components of

career success for half of the disabled high-flyers.

Those who included external criteria in their definition of career success tended to have been nurtured within a middle-class environment during childhood. Thus social class background proved to be a significant factor in determining the notions of success held by participants with acquired and congenital disabilities.

Although the family was universally important in terms of providing the participants with love and support, the findings indicate that expectations of children with congenital disabilities from working-class backgrounds tended to be low.

They were conceptualised in terms of a medical model of disability, which positions disabled people as passive objects of intervention, treatment and rehabilitation, incapable of pursuing an autonomous independent lifestyle. Although disabled children from middle-class backgrounds were not exempt from this, disability may have been overridden by middle-class values of hard work and the need to do well.

Another major determinant was education, which was

generally seen as an essential prerequisite to career success. In the words of one participant: "It is an essential grounding in making the mind flexible, it has been invaluable."

The research showed that participants with acquired disabilities believed becoming disabled to be a determining factor of their career success. In some instances the acquisition of a disability caused the individual to reorientate their career path.

Although social class background is as influential to a disabled child's career progression as it is to that of non-disabled individuals, the disabled minority are still at a disadvantage.

Employers should not assume that disabled people are a homogeneous group, with a single set of drives and desires related to their career. However, they should be aware that the skills a disabled person has to achieve to ascertain equality and acceptance are thought to be beneficial to employment. People with disabilities are good at solving problems, as they encounter one nearly every day of their lives.

At last, an end to feudalism



DEBORAH ORR
The Highlands teem with foreign lairds, bristling with anger at the ingratitude of their serfs

ON my honeymoon, dining with the Laird of Unst and his lady wife. It's not that I'm generally given to hanging out with the landed gentry of Scotland, it's just that the laird has recently come home to the land of his forebears and is - with the help of the ex-convent girl from the home counties who is his soulmate, helpmeet, and lifetime-on-cordon-bleu-course concubine - running the ancestral seat as an understated country hotel. It's not such an enviable way of living, for Unst is the northernmost island in Shetland, which, of course, means it's the last sliver of land in Britain.

We're already finding it hard to like the laird, not because he's such a bad chap, but because the best-known of his ancestors saved the bonxie from extinction. Bonxies are huge, hideously ugly and mind-bogglingly vicious gulls, best-known for dive-bombing any human who wanders on to their breeding grounds. My husband and I have just spent an afternoon slithering across the moorland being buzzed by these creatures in scenes that made Hitchcock's *The Birds* seem as realistic as Peter Mandelson's lifestyle. We're a little shaken.

Still, things are going OK until an enquiry is made at the table as to whether the laird's family had anything to do with the Unst clearances. The laird appears chipper, and murmurs that thankfully his family can hold their heads high. His lady, however, turns into something of a bonxie herself, and starts screeching in her lavishly southern accent that there were no clearances on Shetland. Her husband interjects, explaining that the remains of some empty cottages, never owned by his family, can still be seen a mile away.

"No!" she yells. Their people were traitors, walking out of their own volition, irresponsibly leaving their homes and their land on a promise of easy living down south, maybe even abroad. Where had we heard these vicious lies? From the blasted locals no doubt, was it not?

Well, no. From Eric Linklater's history of Orkney and Shetland. Linklater, she screamed, was a liar. She then announced that she could no longer share a table with the likes of us, and flapped out of the room, like a bonxie flying into the



Large tracts of Scotland are devoted to the feudal pleasures of the hunt. These falconers are preparing to hawk for grouse

Jeff Mitchell/Reuters

sunset. Even the laird himself slumped back in relief at her exit.

Why a middle-aged Englishwoman should feel it so important to rewrite a 150-year-old history in which she could never have had any involvement, may seem like a mystery. Except that there's no mystery here. The Highlands and Islands of Scotland are teeming with incoming foreign lairds and ladies, bristling with anger at the ingratitude of their serfs, while in return the hills are alive with the sounds of bitter locals cursing the bones of their incomer landlords.

Look at the sixth Earl Granville, owner of a 60,000-acre estate on the outer Hebridean island of North Uist. Although relations between lairds and locals had been cordial since the family's purchase of the estate in 1961, crofters were furious when they found that the meagre living they made from the harvesting and sale of seaweed would be a little more if his lordship hadn't invoked an ancient law which entitled him

to claim royalties on all seaweed collected on the island. "It's disgusting, grasping, medieval," said one crofter, and he was absolutely right. Medieval it certainly is.

Until now, Scotland's land ownership has been run on a feudal structure that has survived since the reign of David the First in the 12th century. But yesterday the Scottish Secretary, Donald Dewar, announced radical reforms of land ownership in Scotland which will, among other things, end the superior-vassal relationship whereby landowners can, if they wish, tax seaweed picked up from a beach, or anything else at all they may fancy.

Residents, too, will have the right to purchase land that comes up for sale from absentee or neglectful landlords, and brings us back to local-hating incomer landlords such as poor old Keith Schellenberg, former Olympic bobsleigh champion, and more recently former laird of the Hebridean island of Eigg. He purchased the island as

a holiday home in 1974, and set in motion a grand plan to build a self-sufficient utopia, which included - at the less bizarre end of his set of plans - a craft centre and the importing of a new breed of cattle.

Needless to say, the craft centre closed, the cattle didn't thrive and the whole thing went to hell in a hand-basket. For Schellenberg himself it wasn't so bad, as he wintered on his Banffshire estate. But the locals became fed up with his eccentric lairdship, and a very public battle ensued which culminated in Schellenberg's announcement that "his" islanders were "drunken, ungrateful, lawless, barmy revolutionaries" - followed quickly by his sale of the island to the German artist Martin Eckerhard Maruma. Although, after a massive public appeal - the islanders were refused lottery money to purchase the island - Eigg was purchased from Maruma by the locals, they would have been able to force a purchase direct from Schellenberg under the

new rules. Funding will be set aside for communities in such a situation. Similarly, the future of the estate of Knoydart is also looking rosier today. Spurred on by neighbouring Eigg, the residents of Knoydart have been bidding to buy the estate that they live and work on from Stephen Hinchliffe, a former city trader who is facing investigation by the serious fraud squad after the collapse of his retail empire, Fascia. The locals say the estate is being mismanaged by Hinchliffe and his partner, and if these claims can be proven it will now be possible for the Government to impose a compulsory purchase order, and for the locals to take over ownership. It is truly fantastic, and will change not just the topography of Scotland, but the nation's idea of itself.

Certainly, though, these changes have been a long time coming. Scots have been fulminating for years about the carve-up of the Highlands and Islands by subsidy seekers from Mohammed Al-Fayed

to Terry Wogan, and about the fact that there has never been any protection of Scottish land from foreign ownership. Half of the country is owned by 500 people, few of whom are Scots. Nationalists have been campaigning for years for Scotland to be brought into line with England and the rest of Europe by abolishing feudal structures and regulating land use.

There is no doubt a little political expediency in the timing of Dewar's announcement, as New Labour becomes increasingly antsy about Scotland's seeming desire to move directly from devolution to full independence. But, clearly, on this occasion Westminster is promising something right and necessary and with no strings attached - that one of the first tasks of the Scottish Parliament will be to move Scotland forward a thousand years. As for the good lady of Unst, thank God I'm not sitting round her dinner table this evening. This whole thing will be driving her off her bonxie.

RIGHT OF REPLY

DAVID HART



The general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers replies to an article on absent pupils

DAVID AARONOVITCH'S article ("Please Sir, may I take my children on holiday to the Seychelles?") deserves a reply.

The NAHT's view is that the law, covering the right to take children on family holidays during term time, is being abused, almost to breaking point. More and more parents ignore the fact that they are required to obtain the consent of the head. School policies are waved aside as if they do not exist.

Not all absences adversely affect the education of the children, but many do. Very little has been said about the impact on the other pupils in the class. Even less has been said about the importance of pupils being present on the first day of term.

Of course, there are families who do find it difficult to take holidays during the 14 weeks set aside. The travel companies tempt parents with cheap offers. But the vast majority of schools do take a very strong line on absence during term time. These policies are endorsed by the governing bodies, on which many of the parents sit.

David Blunkett was not talking just about children being absent for one, two or three weeks at a time. The Government is driving an intensive standards agenda. Yet it is the very people who are often the most vociferous about the need to raise standards, who criticise heads for enforcing policies that have received the endorsement of the majority of parents in their schools. The current controversy has, at least, drawn attention to the need to resolve an issue which is getting increasingly out of hand.

Government ministers should throw their weight behind all attempts by schools to ensure that the law is observed, and that policies designed to reinforce standards are supported.

Where society is not a dirty word

IF BLAIRISM is about anything, it is about saying - contra Thatcher - that there is such a thing as society. Which means that there must also be such things as sociologists. Indeed, New Labour seized Middle England by employing the essential tools of sociology. It used observational fieldwork (or "focus groups"), it crunched endless columns of attitudinal statistics. And it had a working hypothesis which presumed, at least, that there was a "social" to which "social-ism" could refer. Out of that came electoral victory - and victory, too, for an intellectual discipline that had been almost as much of a New Right folk devil as striking miners or sponging immigrants.

Yet it's still a slight surprise that, of all the sociological gurus who might have contended for the Prime Minister's attention, it was Anthony Giddens who got the airline ticket to go wonk-



WEDNESDAY BOOKS

CONVERSATIONS WITH ANTHONY GIDDENS: MAKING SENSE OF MODERNITY
BY ANTHONY GIDDENS AND CHRISTOPHER PIERSON, POLITY PRESS, £12.95
PAROXYSM: INTERVIEWS WITH PHILIPPE PETIT
BY JACQUES BAUDRILLARD AND PHILIPPE PETIT, VERSO, £11

ing with Tony in the White House a few months ago. The recent one-off edition of *Marxism Today* was almost entirely composed of those social thinkers - Hall, Hobsbawm, Held - whose long years of reformist speculation had been snubbed by No 10. Yet while these reborn socialists wait for the next totter of world capitalism to bring the party to its senses, Giddens is already in the thick of it, turning his prodigious learning into the common sense of a new political order.

Read this illuminating book of con-

versations with Giddens, and you realise exactly why he has succeeded. For his understanding of what constitutes the "social" is, to use his own terminology, well beyond left and right - and certainly beyond the sentimental collectivism of the old *Marxism Today* crowd. Society, in Giddens's view, is complex, tangled, seemingly unpredictable. We inhabit a "runaway world", a "risk society". If any government wanted a justification for the choice of nudging pragmatism over strict planning, then Giddens's thinking is ready-made for the task.

His interviewer, Christopher Pier-son, is a dogged socialist of the old school. He spends most of this book trying to get Giddens to worry about problems - class struggle, welfare ben-efits, technological determinism - which the director of the LSE seems only too relieved to leave behind. Yet Giddens's confidence comes not just from his proximity to power, but from the prophetic nature of his writings.

A chapter entitled "Structuration Theory" - Giddens's big news of the Seventies - may not seem like the most promising ground. But there it is: an understanding of the relationship between individuals, and the conditions which bear upon them, which is so fiendishly difficult to grasp (particularly for his interviewer) that it's almost mystical. Giddens was talking about a Third Way, be-fore individual "agency" and social "structure", decades before Blair got round to it - and, one must say, before Giddens started turning his own

theories into rah-rah pamphlets. This book also shows that Giddens understood globalisation and the net-worked world much earlier than his contemporaries. What used to be re-garded as his conceptual cloudiness on matters of power and money now turn out to be modest descriptions of reality. What else are our convulsive financial crises, or our remote-controlled Gulf Wars, other than the "disembedding" of social structures - as he puts it - from the constraints of time and space?

Giddens's diagnosis is sharp, but his remedies are still unconvincing. Will an idea of "positive welfare" link the contented middle classes to the poor who claim their taxes? Will we be able to rein in rampant markets and eco-logical disasters with "world gover-nance"? Is the answer to a world endemic with risk and insecurity a turn towards "cosmopolitan democracy"? There's sometimes a sense that Giddens, self-confessedly a theoretician, is happy to keep minting bright new concepts, hopeful that politicians will eventually rally behind them.

Yet as structuration theory says - or is it Buddhism? - you make reality as it makes you. No wonder Giddens is interested in 12-step therapy plans. After such diligence, it's mildly re-lieving to turn to a book of interviews with someone who "never" thought there was such a thing as society any-way. But if Giddens's star is rising in the can-do culture of Blairism, the French thinker Jean Baudrillard's star is shooting to earth. All that



Giddens: talking about a Third Way decades ago Mykel Nicolaou

semiotic nihilism - all those shoulder-shrugs of blank despair at the way our sense of reality has evaporated behind a billion media moments - seem so very Eighties. Don't we have National Grids for Learning now - not to men-tion the Creative Industries Commit-tee - in this best of all possible worlds?

Yet between the elegant ennu of Baudrillard (beautifully translated here by Chris Turner) and the cau-tious system-building of Giddens, the same void lies. Whether you constitute it anew, or lament its dis-appearance, it's still the case that "so-ciety" is surely the most unreliable and elusive of realities. If we wish to invoke it, we need our shamans to raise the vision. So bring on the sociologists - for as long as they're needed, of course.

PAT KANE

WEDNESDAY POEM

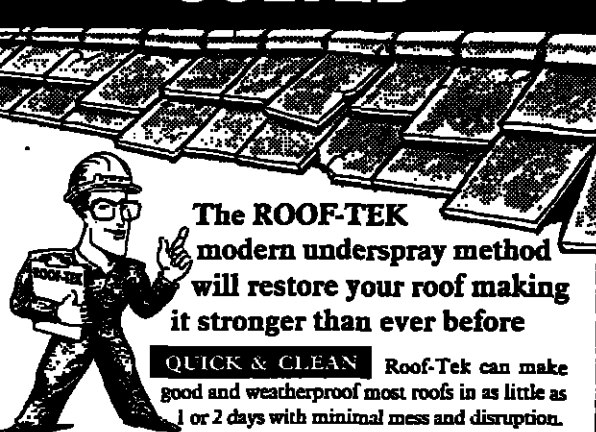
ERIC CLAPTON: 461 OCEAN BOULEVARD
FROM 'SLEEVE NOTES' BY PAUL MULDOON

It's the house in all its whited sepulchritude
(not the palm tree against which dogs piddle
as they make their way back from wherever
it was they were all night) that's really at a list

Through the open shutters his music, scatty, skewed,
skids and skites from the neck of a bottle
that might turn on him, might turn and sever
an artery, the big one that runs through his wrist.

Our poems this week come from volumes shortlisted for the T S Eliot Prize, to be announced on 11 January. Shortlisted authors will read at the Almeida Theatre, London N1 on Sunday 10 January (box office: 0171-359 4404). Paul Muldoon's 'Hay' is published by Faber (£7.99)

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Don Taylor

HANDSOME AND affable, the actor, director and writer Don Taylor, who played the fiancé of Elizabeth Taylor in the classic comedy *Father of the Bride*, spent over a decade portraying clean-cut, all-American young men. In 1950 women students at the major Californian universities voted him "the man we'd like best to enrol with".

He later moved into directing, where his work was considered efficient rather than exciting. He directed over 400 television episodes and dramas, and 16 films, including two successful sequels, *Escape from the Planet of the Apes* (the third in that series) and *Damien - Omen II*. As a writer, his scripts included the television movie *My Wicked Wicked Ways - The Legend of Errol Flynn* (1985), which he also directed.

Born in 1920, in Pittsburgh, and raised in Freeport, Philadelphia, he studied law at Pennsylvania State University, along with speech and drama. A part in a college stage production determined his future. "There was never any question about it," he said. "Once I put my foot on a stage, I knew I was going to be an actor."

After graduation, he hitch-hiked to Hollywood, where he was given a screen-test by Warners but rejected because he was liable to be drafted for war service. MGM took him on, and immediately cast him in a tiny role as a soldier returning on leave in Clarence Brown's touching version of William Saroyan's *The Human Comedy* (1943). Small parts followed in *Girl Crazy*, *Swing Shift Maizie*, *Thousands Cheer* and *Salute to the Marines*, all in 1943, before he enlisted in the army.

While in the service he was chosen by Moss Hart to play a major role in the army air-force production of Hart's play *Winged Victory*, which absorbingly followed a group of six youthful air-force recruits through their training, including interludes with their wives, sweethearts and mothers. It opened on Broadway in November 1943 and brought Taylor excellent reviews for his performance in the role of the gregarious "Pinkie" and, billed as "Corporal Don Taylor", he recreated the role in the film version, directed by George Cukor in 1944.

"*Winged Victory* was a memorable evening in the theatre," said *Variety*, "and the picture is no less worthy." Proceeds from both the play and the film went to army charities and, like Michael Curtiz's *This is the Army*, the film is also rarely shown today.

Taylor's first post-war film was *Song of the Thin Man* (1947), after which he played one of Deanna Durbir's suitors in *For the Love of Mary* (1948). He was a young homicide detective working with an older one (Barry Fitzgerald) in *The Naked City* (1948), made entirely on location in New York City and Taylor's favourite of his films. "It was one of the first of its kind," he stated. "It was improvisational in many ways; now it's very ordinary to go and shoot anywhere, but *Naked City* did it long

before anybody else. The director, Jules Dassin shot a lot of it using hidden cameras."

He was a young war recruit again, but this time taking part in brutal combat, in *Battleground* (1949), then had his best remembered role, as Elizabeth Taylor's fiancé and ultimately bridegroom, in Vincente Minnelli's timeless, beautifully judged comedy, *Father of the Bride* (1950). "That film just goes on and on," said Don Taylor recently, "and so does *Liz*."

The following year he was in the sequel, *Father's Little Dividend*, and he also appeared in *Flying Leathernecks* (1951), *The Blue Veil* (1951), as a former charge of lifetime nanny Jane Wyman, and *King Vidor's Japanese War Bride* (1953), in which he played a GI who finds it difficult to deal with the problems that arise when he returns to the US with an Oriental wife.

He was the missing prisoner-of-war around whom the plot pivots in Billy Wilder's *Stalag 17* (1953) and, by now a heavy drinker, he formed a close friendship with the film's star William Holden. "Bill and I used to drink like it was going out of style," said Taylor later. He was able to put his experience to good use when cast in *I'll Cry Tomorrow* (1955), playing an aviation cadet who goes on the town with singer Lillian Roth (Susan Hayward) and wakes up in a hotel room to find that he is married to her. Not loving each other, the couple go from one party to another over the ensuing months until they divorce.

Taylor's drinking was due in part to his career's unsatisfactory progress and it reached its nadir in 1957:

I had just done Hammer's drecky *Men of Sherwood Forest*, and was getting a divorce so I called my agent and said, "Listen, I've had it. I want to get out of the country - do you have anything?" He said, "Yeah, we've got a picture that's going in Brazil," and I said, "That's for me!" I didn't even read the script, and when I got to Brazil and read it, I was ready to cut my throat.

'It upsets me when I see someone like Kevin Costner getting \$25m to make a film. Apart from a few exceptions - Chaplin, Welles, Olivier - actors were not trusted to direct films in my era'

The film, shot as *Women of Green Hell* but released as *Love Slaves of the Amazon*, featured Taylor as an explorer captured by a tribe of green-skinned warrior women. "It was later on TV all the time, and people would call me up at four in the morning laughing so hard they could barely get the words out."

At this point the actor decided to switch careers. "I had been in about two dozen films and starred or co-starred in most of them, but no longer felt creative forces as an actor." With the help of Dick Powell, who had formed a television production company, Taylor was given the chance to direct an episode of *Four Star Playhouse*, which led to



Taylor with Dorothy Bromley, Joan Egan and Audrey Dalton in *The Girls of Pleasure Island*, 1953

further television work including an episode of *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*. ("I was friendly with Hitchcock, because after *Naked City* I had auditioned for him for a part in *Rope*, which I didn't get.")

The 30-minute episode, *The Crocodile Case* (1958), starred Denholm Elliott and Hazel Court (known at the time as "the scream queen of British horror"). Taylor and Court fell in love, were married in 1964 (it was

I'd directed several times on television, called me and asked me to direct a film he was producing. I was hesitant, but Hazel urged me to do it. The trouble was Mickey and his co-star Buddy Hackett wouldn't stop clowning, and as Mickey was the producer I couldn't stop him. Stars sometimes have too much power. I was directing an episode of *Have Gun, Will Travel* with Richard Boone and suggested that he do such and such and he said "Nope, I'll just walk over there and sit down." He's directing, and I'm just directing traffic.

the musical genre), *The Great Scout and Cathouse Thursday* (1976), *The Island of Dr Moreau* (1978), starring Burt Lancaster and based on the H.G. Wells fantasy), and *The Final Countdown* (1980) which had an intriguing premise - an aircraft carrier enters a time-war and finds itself in the Pacific on the eve of the Pearl Harbor attack - but, as Taylor admitted, a weak ending. "The ending had nothing to do with the whole picture - suddenly they were back in their own era just sailing blithely along. It was produced by its star Kirk Douglas - a superb actor but as a producer a pain in the ass."

Don Taylor directed many television movies, including *Heat of Anger* (1972) with his friend Susan Hayward. He considered himself something of a pioneer in breaking through the barrier between acting and directing. "It upsets me when I see someone like Kevin Costner getting \$25m to make a film. Apart from a few exceptions - Chaplin, Welles, Olivier - actors were not trusted to direct films in my era. Dick Powell, Ida Lupino, Paul Henreid and myself were forerunners of actors becoming directors. I helped break that barrier down, and it is a directors' medium."

TOM VALLANCE

Donald Ritchie Taylor, actor, director and writer: born Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 20 December 1920; three times married (two daughters); died Los Angeles 28 December 1998.

Professor Thomas Kitwood

THOMAS KITWOOD was a pioneer in the field of dementia care. He developed innovative research projects and training courses, challenging the "old culture of care". His aim was to understand, as far as is possible, what care is like from the standpoint of the person with dementia.

One of his major innovations was Dementia Care Mapping, an observational method for evaluating the quality of care in formal settings, which resulted from one of his first research projects. He was always interested and involved in research with the aim of following it through to practice. His book *Dementia Reconsidered: the person comes first* (1997) brought together all his work, developments and discoveries over the last 12 years.

Kitwood was born in 1937 in Boston, Lincolnshire, and educated at Cambridge, achieving a BA in Natural Sciences in 1960. He trained for the priesthood at Wycliffe Hall, and was ordained in 1962. After completing his National Service he went on to teach chemistry at Sherborne School in Dorset for seven years. He then moved to Uganda to teach chemistry at Busoga Boys School, where he also became school chaplain.

It was here that he wrote his first book *What is Human?* (1970), and in 1969 married Jenny Cooper. Their son, Andrew, was born in Uganda, and their daughter, Lucy, in Bradford after their return to England. Kitwood completed an MSc in the Psychology and Sociology of Education at Bradford in 1974. He followed this with a PhD in Social Psychology in 1977, and worked part-time at the university as a lecturer.

He was appointed a senior lecturer in psychology at Bradford University in 1984. His particular interest lay in counselling, psychotherapy and depth psychology. He became involved in dementia when he was commissioned to do a project for Bradford Health Authority.

His research interests were in the details of care practice, and long-term outcomes when care is of high quality. Several substantial projects led to innovations widely accepted in Britain and elsewhere. For example, over the last three years he developed the "Depth Psychology of Dementia Care" course, which related his experience of teaching depth psychology to the dementia field.

The idea was to provide students with an opportunity to explore and develop the feeling, emotional and intuitive parts of themselves, so as

to enrich personal resources in their work and everyday life. Innovations of this kind have played a major part in improving the care of people with dementia, both in the community and in formal settings.

In 1992 he founded Bradford Dementia Group, initially a side-line. Its philosophy is based on a "person-centred" approach, quite simply to "treat others in a way you yourself would like to be treated".

The group moved from the department of Interdisciplinary Human Studies to the School of Health Studies, within Bradford University, in April 1998. It consists of eight core members, with 18 associates spread throughout the UK. These associates are authorised to use the group's innovations or to teach courses developed by the group and aligned to its approach to care.

In September 1998 Kitwood gained a personal chair from Bradford University and was appointed the Alois Alzheimer Professor of Psychogerontology. He was the author of numerous publications on dementia, including *Person to Person: A Guide to the Care of Those with Failing Mental Powers*, with Kathleen Bredin (1991); he recently won the Age Concern "book of the year" award for *Dementia Reconsidered*.

Besides his contribution to research Kitwood pioneered several key educational and training initiatives related to the care of people with dementia. The most popular is a three-day training course on the Person-Centred Approach and Dementia Care Mapping. The uniqueness of the method is that it takes the standpoint of the person with dementia. It is one of the group's most popular short courses, taught nationally and internationally.

As Tom Kitwood's work became known internationally the Bradford Dementia Group developed contacts with Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Holland, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the US. In 1998 he delivered Person-Centred Approach and Dementia Care Mapping courses in Sweden and the US, training in Ohio and North Carolina in October.

Tom Kitwood was a great communicator and well known for his charisma in delivering courses, presentations, conferences and seminars. A person of rare talents, he was an inspiration to many people worldwide. Although he had previously been a school chaplain, he renounced any particular religious attachment, but retained a concern with spirituality, conscious of the art of meditation and the importance of looking after the "inner self". He had a very active social life, and enjoyed long walks in the countryside, games of tennis, dancing and playing the guitar.

LINDA FOX

Thomas Marris Kitwood, psychogerontologist: born Boston, Lincolnshire 16 February 1937; Senior Lecturer in Psychology, Bradford University 1984-98, Alois Alzheimer Professor of Psychogerontology 1998; married 1969 Jenny Cooper (one son, one daughter; marriage dissolved 1986); died Bradford 1 November 1998.



Dementia Care Mapping

Jean Malaquais

AMONG THE writers who were great world wanderers - Conrad, Traven, Cendrars - we should include a lesser-known name, that of Jean Malaquais, a Pole who taught himself French and in 1939 won the prestigious Renaudot Prize for fiction with his extraordinary autobiographical novel *Les Javanais*, lauded to the skies by no less than Trotsky, André Gide and Pierre Herbart.

Malaquais was a most unusual man who led a most unusual life. He was born Wladimir Malacki in 1908 in the Jewish ghetto in Warsaw, into a family he described as "totally agnostic". His father was a professor of Greek and Latin, his mother a musician. At an early age, when he was only seven years old, he became forever suspicious of all authority, and especially of the police, after seeing Russian mounted police slashing off heads with their sabres.

As soon as he had got his high-school diploma, he ran away from home to escape the oppressive atmosphere of the ghetto:

I had the feeling that the end of the world was approaching in Poland, so I wanted to discover the life of other lands before it disappeared entirely. Morally and intellectually I was a tramp, a companion of the dispossessed.

He did all kinds of odd jobs: building labourer, miner in the lead and silver pits of Providence, deck hand in the merchant marine, fruit and vegetable porter in Les Halles. In Paris, he spent all his spare time in the lovely old Sainte-Genève library, the only one that stayed open at night and was centrally heated,



In *Les Javanais* (1939) Malaquais wrote about his life as a miner

where he studied French language and literature all on his own.

By 1933, he had completed the first draft of *Les Javanais*, the utterly frank account of his life as a miner in the "Java" lead and silver mine in Providence. In which all the stateless, homeless foreigners living outside the law could find

labouring work - and no awkward questions asked by the police. These marginals and clandestines were of all nationalities: Germans and Austrians who had fled the Führer's advance, Russians in bad odour with Stalin, Italians whose socialism had brought down the wrath of Mussolini upon them,

Moldavian-Wallachians, Armenians, Turks, Poles - all of them known as "the Javanais".

They enjoyed passable living conditions, and were not deprived of food, drink and tobacco at Madame Michel's corner bar, or of sexual relief at the local brothel, where the girls were kind-hearted. These men from all four corners of the world developed their own pungent jargon spiced with gutter French, Jewish humour, German expletives and operatic bursts of Italian lyricism. It was a temperamental tongue, full of sarcasm, nostalgia, East European derision, but not lacking in tenderness, seriousness and optimism upheld against all odds. It was the original ideal European Community, a model of self-help and mutual trust that our present very loose union of nations would do well to copy.

This violently expressive language formed the basis of Malaquais' literary style, creating a realism that has often been compared with Céline's. The young author was lucky to meet a friend of André Gide, the writer Pierre Herbart, who had accompanied the Master to the Soviet Union on that disillusioning visit.

Herbart was a fervent Communist and a homosexual whose short novel *L'Age d'or* ("The Golden Age", 1953) is the best ever written about young homosexuals' passions: to our shame, this beautiful work has never been translated into English. Herbart put Malaquais in touch with Gide, to whom he sent his novel. Gide was wildly enthusiastic about its original style and unusual subject, praising its "epic grandeur, at once clownish

and tragicomic". It was published by Denoel in December 1939.

Trotsky wrote a famous review of it, which is included in his collected works, and it was given brilliant reviews in the French press. When at the age of 29 Malaquais finally received the news that his novel had been awarded the Prix Renaudot, he was sharing the general boredom of the *drôle de guerre* encamped in

'Morally and intellectually I was a tramp, a companion of the dispossessed'

Lorraine on the Maginot Line, and it was some days before his commanding officer could be persuaded to let him have leave to go to Paris to receive the award and sign thousands of copies of his book.

But the war began to make itself felt and with almost surprising ease the Nazis occupied France. Malaquais made his way to the free zone in the south of France, and in Marseilles met a number of writers and artists in a similar plight, hoping to find a ship to take them to the United States. Among Malaquais' friends were André Breton, Max Ernst, Victor Serge, Heinrich and Golo Mann, Franz Werfel and the

tragic Walter Benjamin, who committed suicide when he was on the point of being smuggled into Spain.

Malaquais was in a similarly dangerous situation, because after being captured by the Nazis he managed to escape. He was given asylum for a few months by the novelist Jean Giono. But things were looking desperate for all those would-be refugees, and Malaquais wrote imploring letters to Gide and Herbart begging for help. In his journals, Gide mentions one of these letters, accusing him and Herbart of deserting him: but Malaquais had forgotten to put his address on the letter, so it was impossible to get in touch with him.

Finally, through the selfless devotion of a young American, Varian Fry, and successful interventions by Gide and Herbart, Malaquais and his companions were guided clandestinely across the Pyrenees into Spain, where Malaquais boarded a ship at Cadiz to Venezuela. There he stayed through the war writing his memoirs of soldiering in France, *Journal de Guerre* and *Journal de Météque*, which of course could not be published in France under what Malaquais calls the *putainiste* Pétain régime in Vichy - a conflation of the word *putain*, "prostitute", and the collaborationist traitor General Pétain. But they were published in the United States in 1943. They have only recently (1997) been published in France, to great and somewhat shamefaced acclaim.

For Malaquais' great novel had fallen into oblivion in France. He taught French for some years in the US, where he wrote a considerable

body of work in the form of novels, essays, plays and short stories. Only one novel, *Planète sans visa*, was published in France in 1947, and went unnoticed. While he was living in America, Malaquais became friendly with Norman Mailer, who was enthusiastic about his work.

Malaquais translated *The Naked and the Dead* into his suitably idiosyncratic French. His novel *Le Gaffeur* (1963) was prefaced by Mailer, as was a collection of short stories, *Coup de barre*. *Le Gaffeur* was translated into English in 1954 as *The Joker*, but the task of transforming the unique style of *Les Javanais* into readable English has apparently proved too daunting for our unadventurous publishing houses.

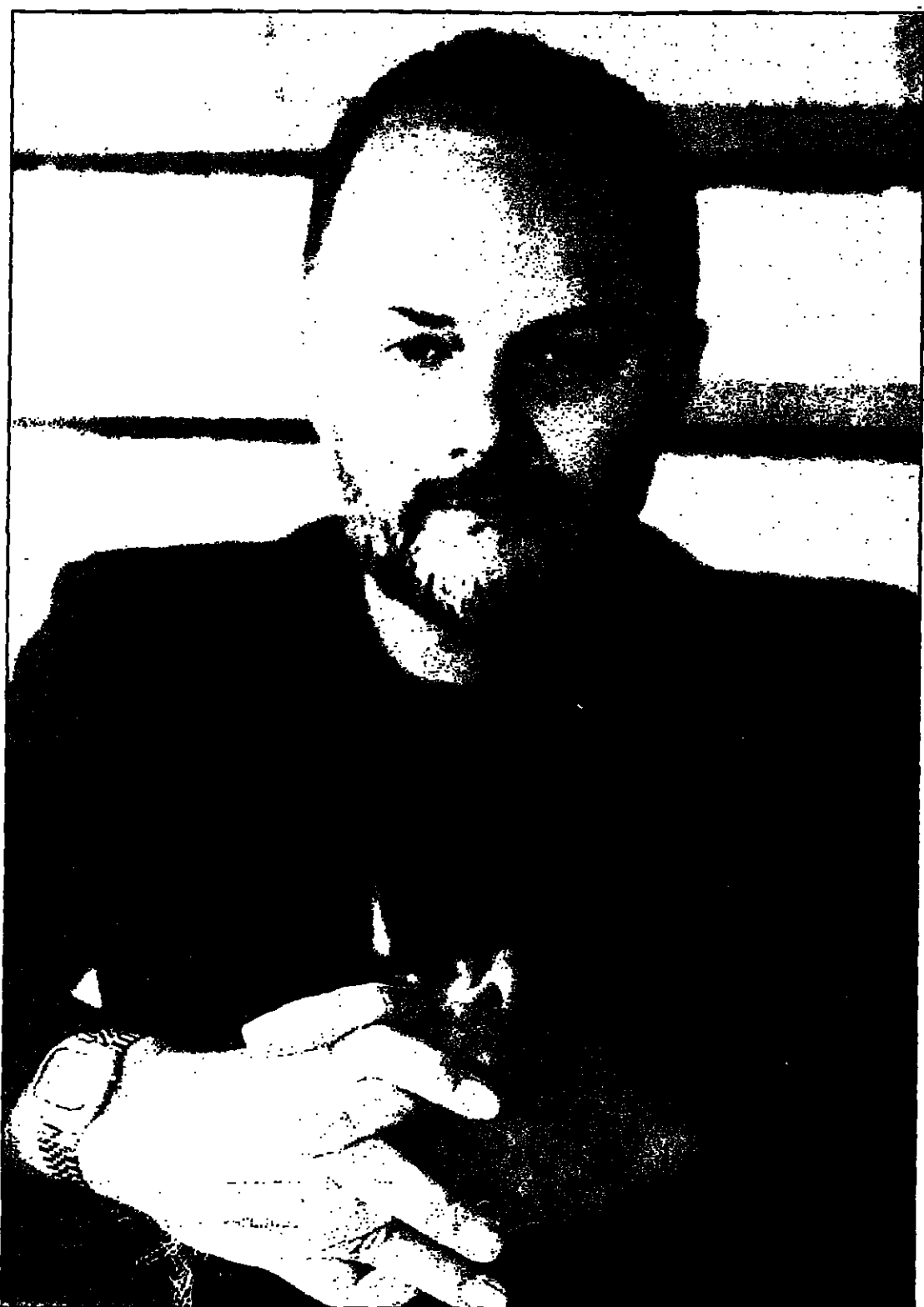
Finally, Jean Malaquais returned to Europe, where he lived most of the time in Geneva. His last work was a monumental study of Kierkegaard which was originally a thesis sustained at the Sorbonne. It was natural that he should be attracted by that unclassifiable outsider, the very untheological theologian and philosopher who was a forerunner of the existentialism Malaquais had been practising without knowing it all his life. Fortunately, *Les Javanais* has been brought back to life in a fine new edition (1995) by the excellent Phébus firm in Paris, which is the publisher of his *Journal de guerre* and which will reissue all his other deplorably neglected works.

JAMES KIRKUP

Wladimir Malacki (Jean Malaquais), writer: born Warsaw 1908; died Geneva 22 December 1998.

You ask the questions

(Such as: John Peel, if you're such a nice guy why do you call your wife the Pig?)



Broadcaster John Peel, 59, was born in Heswall near Liverpool. After finishing his military service in 1962, he began his career as a DJ in America. In 1967 he returned to Britain and became one of the 22 DJs to launch Radio 1. He lives in Suffolk with his wife, Sheila and they have four children.

Did you lose your indie credentials the day you met the Queen?
Jane Fisher, Leicester
I think the fact that I don't strive for "indie credentials" (whatever they might be) probably helps listeners come to terms with the fact that I could be their grandfather.

Don't you get bored with your Mr Nice Guy image?
Nigel Short, Nottingham
I'd rather people like me than dislike me. There are times when I'd like to be a bit of a hooligan, though. Inside every quiet bloke there's a madman struggling to get out.

You're a 59-year-old landowner with an OBE - do you ever feel out of touch with your listeners?
Dan Lillier, Corsham
Having an OBE hasn't really transformed my life. A lot of people will claim, before they are offered an honour of some sort, that they would turn it down. I did discuss it with the family and they said, "What would be the point of doing that?" and I couldn't come up with a convincing answer. We had a wonderful day out, it was incredibly interesting. My mum and dad would have been really proud of me. Do those read like excuses? As to the landowner, we have about eight acres. Two fields and scrubby copse, so it's hardly acres of rolling parkland with amusing follies and water features. I suspect listeners would be more appalled if I tried to be deeply street and a friend of the stars.

Which pop star fulfilled your expectations when you met them?
Wendy Spurling, Norfolk
I liked John Lennon a lot. Elton John used to be a nice bloke. I don't know what he's like now. Polly Harvey scares me. Courtney Love was

really sweet to my daughters once. So was Kylie. I was able to get Tom Jones's autograph at Glastonbury.

You're well known for enjoying a happy marriage, so why do you call your wife the Pig?
Joe Morrison, Brighton
Sheila is called the Pig because she shorts when she laughs.

What was your most embarrassing moment on air?
Ken Holliday, Eastham
I took Bob Dylan's "Hurricane" off the turntable in the middle of playing it as a world exclusive. I do make a lot of mistakes on air. Cynics think I do it deliberately to be cute, but at my age? Come on. It's just that a) I'm listening to the records and b) I play music from almost every format so, for example, "7" singles that play at 33 1/2 can cause trouble.

it is inherently better - just different. The BBC has tended to respect this difference despite the eternal conflict at its heart between the need to draw a big audience and the desire to attract a thoughtful audience.

Which band are you proudest of discovering?
Jack Steadman, Lewisham, London
I really don't think of myself as discovering bands - any more than a newspaper editor discovers the news. I'm quite proud of having helped to make people aware of Captain Beefheart, I suppose.

What was the first record you bought, and the most recent?
Callum Alder, Sheffield
"Blue Tango" by Ray Martin & His Concert Orchestra. Most recent - "El Shaddai" by Jahmali (reggae).

Yes. It took the reins off everything from architecture to literature. You can see it in a more personal way in the clothes and haircuts of people in our village shop, anywhere. Liberation, that's what it was and it liberated itself from the entrepreneurs who sought to control it too.

Which do you think is the most innovative album of all time?
Jasmine Evans, Stroud
Trout Mask Replica (Captain Beefheart) still sounds pretty astonishing to me.

Which band has given you the most pleasure over the years?
Emily Cohen, Chelmsford
The Fall - they are always the same but always different.

If you had to have a DJ moniker, what would it be?
Jessica Harris, Essex
DJ Pretty Tired would suit.

Does your wife ever tell you to turn the music down?
Angie Clifford, York
Sometimes, if she's on the phone. She does pretty much like the same stuff, although she's never come to terms with country.

Can you tell me something you haven't told a newspaper before?
Jo Stoppard, Camden, London
My late mother's boyfriend was Darth Vader in Return of the Jedi.

Which means the most to you, Liverpool Football Club or The Fall?
Zoe Tait, Liverpool
Liverpool.

Is there any musical genre that you don't like?
Anna Lewis, Hove
I have trouble with opera and anything by Benjamin Britten.

What was your drug of choice in the Sixties?
Penny Evans, Cardiff
I smoked lots of grass in California.

What's your new year resolution?
Dale Thomson, Cambridge
To read more books, see more films, do something other than listen to 12" dance remixes all day.

NEXT WEEK

DAYTIME TV PRESENTERS RICHARD AND JUDY, FOLLOWED BY TARA PALMER-TOMKINSON

Send questions for TV husband-and-wife team Richard Madeley and Judy Finnegan, or "It" girl Tara Palmer-Tomkinson, to: You Ask The Questions, Features, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL (fax 0171 293 2182; e-mail yourquestions@independent.co.uk) by noon on Friday, 8 January



Do you play obscure indie music just to be different? Surely you can't really like it?
Chris Norton, Hampstead, London
I don't play anything I don't like. I'm just curious to hear things I've not heard before, so I gravitate towards what you style "obscure", remembering John Lennon's dictum that avant-garde is French for bullshit.

Were you surprised not to be sacked after the Radio 1 shake-up?
Alice Taylor, Lincoln
I didn't think about it much. What I do is very different from what Simon Bates and Dave Lee Travis do. I'm not suggesting, said he quickly, that

When will you start listening to jazz, folk and classical music like most men your age?
Vic Shepherd, Whitstable
I listen to jazz on programmes introduced by Humphrey Lyttelton - a bit of a broadcasting hero - and I listen to Radio 3 a lot, mainly in the hope of hearing something amazing I'd missed before. It still happens.

What would you be doing if you weren't a DJ?
Alex Deacon, Mansfield
I often wonder that myself.

Did punk change anything?
Sam North, Wrexham

THE IRRITATIONS OF MODERN LIFE

24: SLANG BY KATE MULVEY

LAST WEEKEND my boyfriend and I went our separate ways. Not because he was a philandering rotter or a football-mad Neanderthal; it was more a question of words. "But the bottom line, Kate, is like..."

I stopped him right there. It was no good; the snoring and the dirty socks I could put up with, the fluent cliché I could not. No matter how good he looked in his Kenzo suit and Gucci loafers, when he started speaking like an American salesman, he might as well have been Quasimodo. And yes, I know I sound like a verbal pedant, but it is not a question of fastidiousness, but one of aesthetics. The phrase, "the bottom line" is derived from American business-talk and refers to the last line on a financial statement. This may be appropriate to businessmen, discussing profit and loss, but it sounds clumsy and inelegant when out of context. This American inspired sloven-speak is just plain ugly. The great offender, which has slipped insidiously into the English language, is that ubiquitous word "like".



The film 'Clueless' is littered with slang. Paramount

an Americanism that has become so entrenched in our everyday speak that we don't even know it's there - it is delivered without any meaning and acts as a verbal Polyfilla.

There have always been slang and subversions of so-called correct language. The beatniks of the Fifties sat around listening to progressive jazz with their own hip jargon. "Stay cool, daddy-o" was not just lazy speak, but a conscious expression of freedom from the Establishment, which sorted out the rebels from the "squares". In the Sixties, when young

people went around with a flower in their hair and the greeting "right on, brother", it indicated solidarity. Youth-speak has always tried to pervert the norm. Words such as "bad" and "wicked", straight from the hip-hop culture in America, are crucial to the demarcation of the adult and teenage worlds.

Dumb speak, however, has nothing to do with a tribal subcultural language or a Sixties cry for individualism. It is unconscious, disrupting the flow of our everyday language like a nervous tic. These verbal glitches spew

from our mouths like ectoplasm, a sort of ungrammatical disease, spreading unknowingly like a cold virus.

Ameri-speak is everywhere. Turn on the radio or television and you may as well be on planet Thelma. Instead of aspiring to high presentation standards, it has become socially desirable to sound like a yob. Now, dare to speak standard English and you are considered to be pompous and elitist.

Recently, as a guest on a daytime chat show, I managed to come across as a stuffed shirt because I hadn't mastered the art of "pop" speak.

After the introduction, the producer strode up to me; I sounded too noxious for the audience, she said, standing there in combat trousers and Puffa jacket. So, instead of sounding like a disgruntled Miss Jean Brodie, all tight-lipped and strait-laced, I shall fling my dictionary to the wind and get with the programme. Because, like, at the end of the day, if you can't beat them, join them - y'know what I mean?

The mystery of innocent lives cut short

Marie Benthams case may seem an isolated tragedy but more children than we think have a hand in their own deaths. By Jack O'Sullivan

TYPICALLY, A girl of eight is a wondrous being. Going on holiday, wearing a new outfit, preparing for Christmas, are all so exciting. Others in the playground say Santa no longer exists, but more than likely she still believes in him. The age of innocence has yet to be superseded by the ennui and knowledge of adolescence. *Animal Hospital*, Barbie dolls, the latest Disney film, trips to McDonald's, preoccupy her. She still thinks people get pregnant by kissing.

You do not expect a child of this age to hang herself.

Yet last Saturday night Marie Benthams was found dead in her bedroom by her mother, Debbie. She was hanging from her skipping rope. Only a week before, on Boxing Day, she had celebrated her birthday in her home at Irlam, Greater Manchester.

The details surrounding Marie's death are unclear. It seems that, like many a contemporary, she had a row with her mother about going to bed early to prepare for the start of the new term. Like many eight-year-olds, Marie could get very worked up about school. She did not want to go back, because she was being bullied. Then, rushing off to bed at 8pm, upset, she hanged herself. When her mother found her at 10.30pm she could not revive her.

This is a dreadful story that cannot simply be brushed aside on the grounds of its being exceptional. For, though cases of childhood suicide are rare, this partly reflects the reluctance of coroners to ascribe such a verdict. The numbers of children who have had a hand in their own deaths is significant.



Marie Benthams was found dead by her mother, hanging from a skipping-rope in her bedroom. Cavendish

In Great Britain, between 1990 and 1995, recorded suicides averaged fewer than seven a year for children under 15. But a broader category - suicides and undetermined deaths (mainly open verdicts) - averaged 60 deaths, of which about 40 per cent were girls. The Samaritans point out that some of these deaths can probably be attributed to unproven child abuse. But there are still a considerable number of children killing themselves.

So we need to think a bit more carefully about the risk to eight-year-olds such as Marie Benthams. Most experts point out that the suicide danger to this age group is low. "They are much more likely to become ill with psychosomatic ailments like tummy aches," says Dr Guinevere Tunell, a child and adolescent psychiatrist in East London. "It is extremely unusual to come across a case of suicide... they have a limited sense of cause and effect. It is hard for them to compute that

"if I kill myself now then I will not have to go to school."

However, children can have odd ideas about what does happen after death, which can put them in danger. "An eight-year-old may think that being dead means that they go to heaven, which is a rather nice place," says Dr Tunell. "They may think that dying will allow them to join someone special - a loved one or a pet. But they do not necessarily understand it as a permanent state of affairs."

The Samaritans agree, saying that whereas children over 12 tend to have a full awareness of the finality of death, younger children do not. Some believe death to be a reversible process during which the deceased can still see and hear.

This difference in understanding between the two age groups has two consequences. First, it is difficult to ascribe the term "suicide" to a child under 12, since it is so hard for them to think of themselves ending their lives for ever. But under-

12s are at considerable risk of fatally injuring themselves simply because they do not fully appreciate the consequences of their own actions.

This difference in understanding may be reflected in the way children of different ages harm themselves. Dr Tunell says that children over 12 will take an overdose, then go and tell someone they have done it.

"But it is much less common for children under this age to take an overdose. In the few cases I have come across where younger children have tried to kill themselves, it has often been by hanging. It has usually happened in the context of a game or some kind of pretend exercise that has gone horribly wrong."

This may be how Marie Benthams came to die. Perhaps the loss of her father, Philip, played its part. He died after a heart attack two years ago. Maybe she was interested in reaching him in heaven.

We may never know. But her death will be yet another reminder of the powerful grip that school and particularly bullying can have on a child's mind. There is a steady stream of childhood deaths related to this playground torment.

Dr Tunell warns that parents should be particularly alert about bullying when it involves juniors such as Marie Benthams. "They may find it harder to articulate what is happening," she says.

But, most of all, it is vital to listen. "In the few cases I have seen like this of children under 12, the parents have all said that they were quite unaware of the level of distress their child was experiencing."

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This may be the
third time in the his
loss of his mother. But
its part. He did not
attack two years ago
she was not involved
him in the act.

We may never be
her death will be the
murder of the person
school and college
can have a child.
There is a story of
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short about nature
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Bentham. The na
handy to describe
happening. The
but most of all
listen. With me
seen this in the
to the parents
they were quite
the level of distress
was experiencing



JESSICA OGDEN
red kimono, £750; cream silk scarf top, £165, to order.
Jessica Ogden, a Jamaican designer working in London, creates individual pieces of clothing with an artistic aesthetic. From working with Oxfam's NoLoGo re-using clothes and materials donated to the charity, Jessica went on to start her own line in 1993. She uses antique and distressed fabrics, visibly darning and stitching them. Her clients include Björk, Neneh Cherry and Tori Amos. She has exhibited her work in various galleries and shops including The Pineal Eye in London. Jessica is a working proof that recycled garments don't have to adhere to worthy functionalism, but can be unique and beautiful (enquiries, 0171-251 8861)



PLANET VISION
light blue vest, £21; dark blue long-sleeved top, £34.50; drawstring green trousers £44.50.
This company was recently launched in Britain with Dutchman Gert Krannendonk at the helm, and though mainly selling wholesale can also cater for mail order. All products are organically produced in cotton and hemp. The range, although basic in design, has unusual fabrics and garments such as bras and leggings in cotton-Lycra, brushed cotton fleeces, and naturally occurring coloured cotton which is bred (not genetically engineered) in the States, and comes in earth tones. They hope to manufacture in Europe, and possibly Africa (enquiries and catalogue, 0181-533 7766)



CONSCIOUS EARTHWEAR
red fleece dress, £105.
Sarah Ratty started the Conscious Earthwear company in 1993, turning her hobby into a business - the idea being to make fashionable clothes from environmentally friendly fabrics. At least 50 per cent of the items made adhere to these principles, and mainly use materials that bear the Ecotex logo, a European standard that indicates that textile manufacturing processes are ecologically sound. They have used hemp linen and jersey in their spring summer '99 collection. This fleece is made from recycled plastic bottles, which make a versatile modern fabric. Available from Selfridges, Oxford Street, London W1 (enquiries, 0171-253 4802)



PREEN
red recycled leather coat, to order.
Justin Thornton and Thea Bregazzi launched Preen in 1995. A part of the collection is made with used fabrics such as tweed, silk and leather. Justin designed for Helen Storey's Second Life range. "People like the fact that our recycled items are one-offs," says Thornton. They are supported by Kate Moss, Honor Fraser, Liv Tyler and Justine Frischmann. Prices from £30 to £420. Preen, 5 Portobello Green, 281 Portobello Road, London W10 (enquiries, 0181-968 1542)

Eco-centrics

Is it possible to be both fashionable and environmentally friendly? The textile industry poses serious threats to the environment, from the chemicals used in fabric production, through to the pollutants contained in most clothes detergents. The fashion industry depends upon people buying new clothes each year, creating an estimated £30bn worth of unused clothing sitting in Britain's wardrobes. Yet they go on churning them out, and we continue to buy them. Environmentalism is still associated with the "new age" look of the early Nineties, with natural hemp and wooden love beads, or with the traveller trends of dreadlocks, combat gear and Peruvian sweaters. But we need not dress like Neil from *The Young Ones* to wear environmentally sympathetic clothing. The clothes featured here are all wearable, fashionable, and made with the health of the environment in mind.

By Hannah Hunter. Photographs by Suzy del Campo

Hair and make-up by Lisa Moore at Julie Bramwell Represents, using Stila. Model Tenzin at Select



AMANO
red, hooded cable-knit sweater, £50.
The company started in 1988, from a stall in Camden market, and now supplies shops around the country. Fabrics are carefully sourced for ethical and environmental values. A lot of the knitwear is hand-spun and dyed in Bolivia. Recycled knitwear is made from wool, hemp, denim and plastic bottles. The sweater pictured is hand-knitted from English wool with low-impact dyes. Amano, Chalk Farm Road London NW1 (enquiries, 0171-267 6918)



VEGETARIAN SHOES
mules by Deja, £45; ribbed hemp socks by Natural Collection, £15 for three; black organic cotton rights, £15. Vegetarian Shoes was started in Brighton in 1990 by Robin Webb, an ex-art student who had been scouring the country for a breathable, non-plastic alternative to leather. He now stocks an impressive range alongside his own, including the American label, Deja, made from recycled materials such as tyre rubber and wet-suit off-cuts. From 12 Gardner Street, Brighton BN1 1UP (mail order, 01273 691 913)



KOMODO
blue Yeti knitted coat, £100; hemp denim jeans, £60. Headed by Mark Bloom, the company has been producing environmentally conscious streetwear for 10 years. Fabrics are sourced for ethical and environmental qualities, eg the jacket above is made in Nepal by exiled Tibetans using traditional techniques and organic dyes. Other fabrics include recycled plastic fleece, hemp-mix jersey and banana leaves. Michelle Mullins, formerly of Maharishi, is now on board to sharpen up the design (enquiries, 0171-490 8101)



PATAGONIA
yellow fleece £69.95; organic blue jeans, £59.95; brown boots by Birkenstock, £110. Started in the late Sixties in California, by a group of surfers and climbers, Patagonia gives a percentage of profits to environmental groups. It was the first company to use recycled fleece in 1993, uses only organic cotton, and continues to find and develop high-performance low-impact materials. Available from branches of Snow and Rock (enquiries, 0171-831 6900)



GREENFIBRES
natural cotton/silk long-sleeved vest, £35; hemp jeans with recycled metal buttons, £96. This mail order company is the brainchild of Gaby and William Lana. All fabrics are either organic or chemical-free, and make as low an impact as possible on the environment. The clothing is of basic design, not high fashion, but certainly made to last. The catalogue includes underwear and baby clothes as well as information about the processes of making the garments. Greenfibres (enquiries, 01803 868 001)

OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS

Birkenstock, one of the first companies to carry out an environmental audit, uses low-impact dyes, sustainable cork and natural latex (mail order, 0800 132 194, and from The Natural Shoe Store, Neal Street, London WC2).

The Natural Collection catalogue has some clothing plus organic chocolate and recycled computers - organic cotton tights, cotton-hemp mix socks, babyclothes (01225 442 288)

Natural Fact provides a range of green goods, from shampoo to underwear (0171-352 2227)

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SECRETARIAL

'Leaning in the doorway is a wizened gnome'

THE TEMP

PAGE 14

Margaret Howell

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You're a Bavarian social worker with a movie running in your head. It started after reading a Cormac McCarthy novel. What to do? Why, make a Cormac McCarthy concept album, of course, and add a footnote to the epic story that is Lit-Rock. By Phil Johnson

It's only words 'n' all but I like it

It was the practical criticism paper, and the last of my Eng lit finals. The academic retblew his whistle and we all turned over the paper to find that the unseen text was Bob Dylan's "Hard Rain's a-Gonna Fall", with the whined words from the record transcribed into the formal conventions of proper poetry. It just wasn't fair. You realised that the examiners wanted an earnest analysis of all those images piled up together in a Littlewoods catalogue of poetic symbols, along with a critical nod to the historical context of the Cuban missile crisis. But you also knew in your bones that Bob Dylan had tossed the song off as carelessly as his old surname, and that he really wanted to be Little Richard, whose own "Awop bop alobop alob bam boom" was as close to poetry as rock'n'roll would ever get.

Whenever someone talks about the poetry of rock lyrics (and in moments of weakness we've all done it), you want to reach for your gun, and then your instrumentals. If the lyrics are "poetic", it usually means you can't understand them; that the words have given up the task of communication as a bad job, favouring instead some sloppy attempt to make use of pure sound over sense. There are exceptions, of course: odd bits of Van Morrison (amongst reams of gibberish), a few lines by Leonard Cohen (a poet and novelist long before he became a singer-songwriter), and Bob Marley's "No Woman No Cry", which would look good in any anthology of Caribbean verse. But two words shall suffice to prove the sonic-gibberish rule: Marc Bolan. Although the Afro'd elf once published a volume of poetry, *Warlock of Love*, his lyrics are a case study in the fallacy of sound over sense.

The history of rock's run-ins with literature in general is not very distinguished, either. Yes, there was once an album named after Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal*, but it was by a dreadful pre-metal boogie act called Mountain. "Wuthering Heights" was memorably warbled into the charts by Kate Bush ("Cathée-a-come-home-a-now"), and Nick Cave has made a career as a one-man Gothic novel, but at least you felt they have actually read a few books and, in Cave's case, even written them. Jack Kerouac and

William Burroughs have inspired so many bad lyrics about drugs and driving that you begin to doubt their worth. Pete Townshend of The Who may have written a couple of books, but you'd happily swap them - and his rock operas - for just one more three-minute masterpiece like "Substitute". The lyrics of rock or pop, it seems, attain true art only when they're not aiming at achieving it, and attempts to "adapt" works of literature into albums (usually 1984, or other sixth-form classics) are doomed from the start.

But when you hear of an album inspired by the brilliant American writer Cormac McCarthy's novel *Suttree* - his most dense and forbidding work - the project sounds

The lyrics of pop attain true art only when they're not aiming at achieving it

strangely promising. When you discover that Buddy and the Huddle, the group whose name is on the record, is in fact two Bavarian social workers, this only adds a pleasing note of eccentricity to what is already a rather odd undertaking.

The album, *Music for a Still Undone Movie Maybe Called "Suttree"*, may not have the catchiest of titles, but it's in fact rather good: an impressionistic mix of old-timey country, rockabilly and blues that fits the Fifties Knoxville, Tennessee, setting of the novel like a glove. It's less an attempt to put the novel to music (which, in any case, McCarthy's copyright wouldn't permit) than a compendium of the kind of tunes that could have been playing in the various low-life dives that the hero, Cornelius "Buddy" Suttree - a scion of a famous family gone to the bad, and then some - visits in his daily search for drink and money for more drink.

For Roland Kopp, who along with his fellow children's care-home worker, Michael Stroll, is Buddy and the Huddle (although they also call on the services of a number of other musicians for the album), the project was a true labour of love.

After reading *Suttree* in 1995, Kopp recalls that, "a movie began to run in my head". After sharing his vi-

sions with Stroll, they decided to make a record inspired by the novel. "I said, 'Let's go to Knoxville and prove whether we can really do this.' My buddy said yes and we booked the flights. We spent a lot of money but I talked to my wife and said, 'I have to do this. If I don't I will be angry some day.' It was a mission. I ordered city maps from the Knoxville tourist bureau, and in our luggage we had a tape recorder and some cameras. We flew to Memphis and then to Knoxville. Next day we rented a car and went on safari. We had the book with us and we went to all the places Suttree went."

Like many anthropologists and ethnographers in the past, Kopp and Stroll found that the natives cared less about their heritage than they did themselves. "The novel is completely unknown there," Kopp says sadly. "They don't know about it, and they are really stupid people."

Despite a lack of understanding from the inhabitants of Knoxville, they discovered a number of models for settings in the book, and met various street people who could have been characters from it. They also did some recording on location, but before they could complete the album at home in Neumarkt, near Nuremberg, they first had to build their own studio. "The construction of the novel is episodic, so each of us would take an episode and then we would decide on what instruments to use, and on the mood, and then we tried to get the right musicians."

The album was originally released in Germany as two separate LPs. "We ourselves only produce vinyl," Kopp says. "It's the philosophy of our work, and vinyl is the medium from the time that the story took place." What Cormac McCarthy thinks of the album isn't known. "The record is only inspired by the novel, so it's not forbidden, but if it used words from *Suttree* it would be difficult. But McCarthy has a website and *Suttree* is often discussed on it." It would be nice to think of the novelist at home in El Paso giving the LP a spin, and getting a kick from the high fidelity of such an odd homage. As Lit-Rock goes, he could do an awful lot worse.

"Music for a Still Undone Movie, Maybe Called 'Suttree'" is out this week on Glitterhouse Records



Main Picture: Cormac McCarthy; above: Buddy and the Huddle; right: Bob Dylan, the original rock poet

Marion Etlinger

Dust off the old riffs

THE CHIN-STROKING atmosphere that usually pervades up-and-coming band showcases was conspicuously absent at the beginning of Pierce Panda's five-night gathering at the Bull and Gate. Such events generally draw gaggles of errant A&Bs, pickled hacks and industry bangers-on, but on Monday night it seemed that the crowd was there simply to hear good music and show support for one of the last bastions of musical independence.

Pierce Panda has always remained unconcerned with musical high-flyers. The diminutive label prefers to act as a conveyor belt to superstardom, and has shown a prophetic insight into tomorrow's bands. They have so far groomed and nurtured Placebo, Kenickie, 3 Colours Red and Babybird, among others, before chivalrously handing them over to bigger labels.

The indie popsters Linoeum are next on their roster and were headlining the label's first showcase evening, held to celebrate five years in business.

The vocalist, Caroline Finch, had modelled herself on the Sixties girl-about-town style, but came across more like a *Corry On* film extra, with her false eyelashes, top-sided beehive and girly pout. She had secured the attention of the audience long before the music started by wearing a skin-tight, flesh-coloured top that, from a few feet away, created the illusion that she had nothing on at all. As far as the slavering boys at

POP

LINOEUM
BULL AND GATE
LONDON

the front were concerned, her attire no doubt made up for the insubstantial opening track. "Slowdown" was intended to hark back to the shoe-gazers of the early Nineties, but it was an ill-judged choice to open the show.

Their new single, "You're Back Again" offered more verve with its substantial guitar riffs and cute, breathy vocals. "Venus and Libertine" was also delivered with considerable welly and, to the delight of the front row, elicited some tiger-cub snarls from the singer. Unfortunately, her voice couldn't live up to her maniacal facial expressions.

Musically, Linoeum are at their best when hammering home abrasive guitar riffs and frenetic drumming, though Finch's wispy voice is perhaps better suited to the slower, melancholy numbers.

As they trawled through the different guises of indie pop they offered few surprises, though the familiarity that surrounded each song felt strangely comforting. Linoeum don't pretend to be rewriting the past. The fact that they imitate it closely seems a more honest approach - and any band that makes you want to rush home and plunder your own record collection can't be all bad.

FIONA STURGES

Scherzospotting: Chopin for anoraks

THE MANIA for performing "cycles" of works never intended to be heard together, or performing all a composer wrote for one medium, cannot entirely be blamed on the recording industry - it predated it. We ought, really, to have outgrown it by now. It thrives on a transposing instinct among music-loving anoraks.

Sunday afternoon gave them a chance to tick off Chopin's four Scherzos in Kevin Kenner's piano recital. At least he played them out of

their published sequence, so that the first two pieces, whose repeated sections seem the most otiose, were separated.

Kenner is not the flashiest keyboard athlete, and sometimes he was too reluctant to go for attacks in the treble. It's probably more a matter of temperament than technical ability, for his octaves in the third Scherzo were very fast and secure. What he did do for these pieces, which so often decline into hurdle races punctuated by accidents, was give

CLASSICAL

KEVIN KENNER
WIGMORE HALL
LONDON

NIKOLAI DEMIDENKO
WIGMORE HALL
LONDON

them a sense of cohesion.

That, too, was the great virtue of his performance of Chopin's Funeral March Sonata. Very few pianists have the courage, or intelligence, to

maintain such tension in the first movement, or top it with such a fast, tight Scherzo. The Funeral March itself was really serious, not strutting, and the melodic relief of its middle section was suspended at a mesmerising mezza voce. The most wonderful movement of all, the scurrying perpetual motion of the last, brimmed with half-revealed secrets.

Chopin's 24 Preludes form a cycle which he did intend to be played as such. In his recital promoted by the Wigmore Hall

and Radio 3, Nikolai Demidenko played them with great naturalness, even if he sometimes betrayed a sense of strain - he had one of those cribs inside the piano which some pianists find reassuring but must be impossible to read from.

Demidenko had brought in a vintage Steinway of the 1890s, and it sounded much leaner-toned than a modern instrument. Demidenko was kind to it, yet although the climax of the final Prelude was a long way short of triple-forte by

today's standards, it seemed grand enough in context.

But the piano - and Demidenko - came into their own in three of Rachmaninov's second set of *Etudes-tableaux*, Op 39. Here Demidenko's lissome action and stylish bravura combined with the instrument's mellow clangour to evoke a brilliant vision of a vanished era.

ADRIAN JACK

Nikolai Demidenko's recital is repeated on BBC Radio 3 on Saturday at 1pm

Low-life, violence, casual sex. Opera, in fact

THE HOUSE lights are not dimmed, but suddenly extinguished, and the orchestra launches into the galloping prelude. Soon the black front drop, replacing the traditional heavy curtain, rises to reveal a towering set of circular balconies full of armed soldiers, lit melodramatically from above.

Is this *Carmen* set in Seville or Santiago? The long shadow of Finocchietti seems to hang over the opening scenes of Phyllida Lloyd's new production. Certainly this is a society in which the military are dominant, if not in power. When Micaëla appears, an innocent tourist with a street map, it is not light-hearted banter that greets her: The soldiers are obscenely threatening.

Even the children are aggressive. They look like an incipient teenage gang.

Phyllida Lloyd has done to *Carmen* more or less what

she did to *La Bohème* for Opera North a few years ago. She has brought seriousness and a sense of reality to pieces that are traditionally treated as soft-centred, feel-good outings. And, as with *Bohème*, the results are powerful and disturbing, if not always perfectly in tune with the work.

But *Carmen* is essentially a story of "low life", of violence, feuding, lawlessness and casual sex. As its first, disapproving audiences realised, it is squalid rather than glamorous. What we get at the opening of the final, brief act, for instance, is a parade of all the tacky tourist goods you'd expect to see outside a local bullfight - fans, capes, posters, soft drinks. And when Escamillo makes his first appearance in the café, it is as a cut-price Elvis, clad in leathers with shirt open to the waist. Mark Stone, though, needed more

OPERA

CARMEN
OPERA NORTH
LEEDS

swagger and conceit in his voice, as well as his acting. He had the right presence, but was vocally rather colourless.

The other three principals were all more convincing. Susannah Glanville as Micaëla was no pallid country flower, but a resourceful and dramatic character, as befits a woman who dares to confront not only the soldiers of Act One, but the equally menacing drug smugglers of Act Three.

As José, Antoni Garfield Henry looked and acted exactly right. You know from the moment that Carmen picks out this hardish corporal in glasses, to roars of laughter from all around, that he will be out of his depth, dazzled and finally ob-

sessed by this self-possessed, sensual woman. His tenor is not ingratiating, or especially rich, but he gained in assurance as the evening went on and had great verbal clarity.

And Ruby Philogene as Carmen? She has the allure and the style, and turns in an acting performance which complements Henry's. And the voice is exactly right, again with plenty of words. But as yet the vocal performance is too bland and uninflected, and she needs to project more into the auditorium. But this *Carmen* is set for a long run, and these individual performances will surely mature and develop.

In smaller roles, Richard Whitehouse (Morales), Katherine Henderson and Denise Mulholland (Mercedés and Frasquita) stood out, while both choruses, children and adults, were excellent. Andras Ligeti conducted a



Ruby Philogene as Carmen

Tim Smith/Guzalian

performance whose dramatic intensity matched the production's *Carmen*, with its superb characterisations and utterly convincing narrative, is treated in this production as

one of the great operatic dramas - which it is.

ANTHONY ARBLASTER

To the end of January, returning to Leeds on 3 March

And nothing but the truth

The Tricycle Theatre's riveting staging of the Scott Inquiry into the 'arms to Iraq' affair was so eye-opening that it was summoned to appear at the House of Commons. Now the same theatre is taking on the Stephen Lawrence inquiry. By Dominic Cavendish



The Parents
Doreen and Neville Lawrence, mother and father of the murder victim



The Victim
Stephen Lawrence, whose murder caused the public inquiry



The Suspects
The five men accused but never convicted of Lawrence's murder



The Policeman
Sir Paul Condon, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner



The Lawyer
Michael Mansfield QC, Counsel for the Lawrence family

There are moments in history when plays write themselves and all we have to do is bear witness. Nicolas Kent, the artistic director of the Tricycle Theatre, believes this passionately, and with good reason. A number of the most powerful dramatic experiences in recent memory seem to have materialised within the walls of his Kilburn playhouse, the pay-off for a rare commitment to show the public things it doesn't usually see. In 1994, Kent staged re-enactments from the Scott Inquiry into the 'arms to Iraq' affair, *Half the Picture*. There followed two reconstructed war crimes tribunals, *Nuremberg* and *Srebrenica*. From tonight, for one month, the show is called *The Colour of Justice*, a dramatised version of the inquiry – ordered by the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, and conducted by Sir William Macpherson – into the death of the black teenager Stephen Lawrence.

The truth is always shocking. With *Half the Picture*, the frisson of mischievous delight caused by seeing actors showing the political elite at their embarrassed, squirming worst was tempered by hearing the verbatim language of governmental duplicity. The manner with which the captured Nazi high command denied their guilt in *Nuremberg* had members of the audience screaming out in rage. *Srebrenica* – based on the Role 61 Hearings against the Bosnian Serb leaders Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic at The Hague – caused ugly scenes during discussions. In the case of anything related to Stephen Lawrence, a quiet night

'This case touches the whole simmering race argument in this country'

overview than that offered by contemporaneous media coverage – a piecemeal approach made patchier by disallowing the presence of TV cameras at public inquiries. Anyone wanting a synopsis of events will be well served. The failure to give any first aid to the victim, to follow up leads, to make arrests, to keep notes, to conduct adequate internal inquiries: the depressing details spanning three abortive investigations are all there.

The validity of this fourth reconstruction may appear self-evident, especially since the inquiry's findings are due to be published in a matter of weeks. But given the huge controversy surrounding the

case of Stephen Lawrence – the inquiry owes its existence to the perceived systematic failure of the Metropolitan Police to bring the murdered teenager's killers to justice – nothing can be assumed. Richard Norton-Taylor, the *Guardian* journalist responsible for editing all the previous projects except *Srebrenica*, spent three months last year extracting 1 per cent of material from a small forest's worth of paper, while commuting to and from work by bus. Almost 11,000 pages of transcript have been whittled down to 100 pages of play script. Fifty-six days of evidence-giving – a welter of allegations, admissions and rebuttals – have been condensed into two-and-a-half hours of drama.

But theatre, especially when it is as intimate as the Tricycle, creates a shift of emphasis, intensifying the emotional involvement of the audience. On the one hand, this creates an opportunity for a shared experience. "The fact that you are sitting there with strangers, all feeling a common indignation, a common passion, is immensely strengthening," Kent argues. "It restores theatre's ancient role as part of the democratic process."

On the other hand, there is the risk that the increased sense of involvement may impede greater understanding: watching police officers on the rack could simply become a spectator sport. Richard Norton-Taylor is anxious to avoid that.

"The practical incompetence of the police is shown, as is the thread of racism, conscious or unconscious, that lies behind it. There's also a hint of corruption. The

language that many of the police witnesses use often damns them." However, he insists: "This shouldn't turn into a pillorying of the police. It would be wrong if it turned into some form of medieval entertainment." He is confident that, though by definition partial, the piece is not unfairly biased. He even worried that literalness itself might be deemed unjust. "Aside from the fact that very few of the sentences make grammatical sense, I wondered whether it was fair to set down in stone remarks made by the police while being questioned," he explains. "I thought perhaps these people might be singled out and demonised. But I realised that they stay pretty anonymous."

The exchanges lifted range from the immediately disturbing to those that cast the witnesses in a more sympathetic light. The police are shown blatantly contradicting themselves, and the sinister repeated refrain of "I don't remember" echoes the non-cooperation of the five chief suspects (only one of whom, Jamie Acourt, is featured). Against that, there are other remarks to take into consideration – a reference to a birthday card delivered by one of the family liaison officers, say, or the admission of racial prejudice by a bystander who went out of his way to help the investigation.

Kent believes that *The Colour of Justice* has all the hallmarks of great drama: "It has intellectual rigour, flashes of humour, emotional conflicts, and an important quality of mystery and ambiguity." Some of the more evasive responses re-

call the civil-servant-speak of *Half the Picture*, while some of the slip-ups might be termed farcical were it not for the tragic circumstances. At one point, Michael Mansfield QC, counsel for the Lawrence family, referring to a corrupt officer known only as XX, jokes: "This is becoming like a Pinter play with surreal references."

In a Pinter play there is wide scope for interpretation. An air of menace surrounds those circling questions and answers. Here, though, the onus falls on the actors not to overplay any ambiguity. There is a responsibility to represent the characters as faithfully as possible – the

'There is a responsibility to represent characters as faithfully as possible'

method is to "inhabit" rather than imitate. Sitting in on rehearsals upstairs at the Tricycle, it becomes clear that those playing the police witnesses have the hardest task.

Both Jeremy Clyde, who is playing Mansfield, and James Woolley, playing Edmund Lawson, counsel to the inquiry, met their real-life counterparts. Mansfield was by far the more theatrical of the two – but the sincerity of neither was in doubt. By contrast, those playing the police had no access to the originals and have had to rely on tapes and intuition, building up the body language through the words. How much their characters are performing (many were accused of "going through the

motions"), is, though, one of the implicit unresolved questions of the inquiry. At one point, Mark Penfold, who plays William Illsley – formerly detective chief superintendent in charge of the investigation into Lawrence's murder – asks if he can rattle through his scene with Mansfield at twice the speed, in order not to appear to be weighing up each response. "It can feel as though you are doing far too much, or commenting on your character. But if you play it totally neutrally, that's not how it happened, either – the police got very rattled when accusations were made."

Likewise Tim Woodward, playing Assistant Commissioner Ian Johnston, has a spot of bother reading out the formal apology to Neville Lawrence. "You've got to be really careful with that character," Kent urges. "If you're not, you're patronising him. He's a man with limited sensitivities but he's got to think he's being enormously sensitive."

There is no doubting the sensitivity of Nicolas Kent and his team, but it is a sensitivity that carries clout. Some good may come of *The Colour of Justice*. "Stephen Lawrence's murderers are not going to be brought to justice, any more than Karadzic and Mladic are," says Kent, "but at least what happened is being rehearsed in public, and the wrong done to the Lawrences by the people who killed their son is aired. That must be a healing process."

'The Colour of Justice', Tricycle Theatre, London NW6 (0171-228 1000) previews from tonight to 6 Feb

DEBUT: EDWARD PETHERBRIDGE

The role: Barney Blue-Eyes in the school play
The year: 1946
The place: St Stephen's School, Bradford

I THINK I first wanted to be an actor at the age of seven when I saw the great – and I'm sure he was great – panto dame and comedian Norman Evans. I was sitting in the gods of Bradford Alhambra and it seemed to be the best view of the town I'd ever had.

Suddenly I was taken out of the grim, soot-ridden backstreets where I lived by the sight of this beautiful golden-lit stage. When I went home, I immediately built a cardboard proscenium arch toy theatre, which was like a talisman, a reminder of this visionary scene. For a long while I wanted to be a set designer, but the art teacher at our grammar

school wouldn't let anyone from C-stream anywhere near his model set.

My first public appearance was in my last year at elementary school. I can't remember the name of the play, but I remember that my first line on the English stage was: "Good morning, Mrs Lollipop, I've brought the eggs you wanted. Six, I think you wanted." It must have got a bit of a laugh because no one ever saw six eggs at that time.

My character was called Barney Blue-Eyes. I don't have blue eyes, so it must have been talent rather than typecasting that got me the role. I remember there was a big picnic scene, featuring extras from the lower class who were supposed to be getting strawberries and cream – which, again, was a dream in those days.

On the day, they rather



surprised us by issuing the strawberries and cream in the form of jelly on saucers. It was quite an event – we didn't get treats at that school. It went like a riot to the senses and I became aware that the audience was finding everything very funny. What had happened was that a stage full of children had stopped being self-conscious and trying to act, and were just being. It was a realistic coup. Something dramatic. It could have been my first

acting lesson – I probably saw it in less sophisticated terms, back then.

Anyway, I must have misbehaved sometime later because I was sent to see the headmaster, which meant only one thing in those days – the cane, an instrument that was used with immense lavishness. But I didn't get punished. The head said: "It's Barney Blue-Eyes, isn't it? That was absolute perfect casting for you." It was somehow an acknowledgement that I had put my head above the parapet and glowed a little bit. He chased me back to the classroom, but I still managed to make a dignified actor's entrance.

Edward Petherbridge appears in *Krapp's Last Tape* and *Breath* at the Arts Theatre, London, WC2 (0171-836 2132) until 6 February

Half-way out of the closet

REVIEW

A SONG AT TWILIGHT
KING'S HEAD THEATRE
LONDON

NOEL COWARD used to maintain that his refusal to come clean about being gay sprang from a solicitous wish not to disillusion all those harmless middle-aged ladies in Goring-by-Sea who "harboured secret desires" for him. But there was also the tiny matter of the laws of England which, until 1967, made him a criminal. Then again, the conjunction in his work of a gay sensibility and ostensibly heterosexual relations had a potent across-the-board appeal. Can a man forced to lead a double life sacrifice too much in the interests of success? What emotional damage does such concealment inflict? The Coward centenary kicks off with a revival of the 1966 play *A Song at Twilight*, in which the Master finally brought himself to address these questions openly, if evasively.

The ironies surrounding this current production are rather more interesting than the pro-

duction itself, which lacks confidence and definition. It is directed by the theatre critic Sheridan Morley, whose own pioneering biography of Coward, published in the late Sixties, had to keep mum about the love that had, by that time, in other quarters dared to speak its name. For all the criticisms *A Song at Twilight* levels at its hero, Coward was in basic agreement with his self-protective pessimism about uprooting prejudice. This hero, Sir Hugo Latymer, an eminent elderly author who has resorted to the camouflage of a long, presumably sexless marriage, is played well here by Colin Redgrave – a piquant choice because he has himself written a most sensitive and insightful

book about the bisexual double life of his celebrated father, Sir Michael, one of whose male lovers was... Noel Coward.

Set in a private suite in a luxurious Swiss hotel, the play explores the crisis precipitated by the arrival of Carlotta, an actress still smarting from an affair in the distant past with Hugo. At the end of a sparring dinner à deux, she reveals that she has in her possession letters Hugo wrote to the male love of his life, whom he dumped in pursuit of success. The skirmishes between this reunited pair are, in this production, desperately uneven. Nyree Dawn Porter's faltering delivery and smilingly apologetic manner are at odds with the amused, tantalising aplomb and mettlesome truculence with which she should keep us and Hugo guessing. And she looks most extraordinary: the hair is Goldie Hawn, the wrinkles more Golda Meir – odd, given the repeated references

in the text to Carlotta's amazing face-lifts.

Redgrave is in a different league (as is Kika Markham, excellent as a long-suffering German wife). Exuding all the petulant self-centredness and grandeur of someone who has spent his life playing Queen Bee in a silk dressing-gown, Redgrave also brilliantly hints at an underlying thrombosis of despair. The play behaves as though Coward's own body of work was free from the emotional emptiness it detects in Hugo. Not so. Rewind the clock by two decades or so and Hugo is revealed as, essentially, Garry Essendine, the spoilt Coward alter ego in *Present Laughter*, a play that significantly pays all the penalties of pretend heterosexuality.

PAUL TAYLOR

A shorter version of this review appeared in the later editions of yesterday's paper

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Euro pirates sail in

The arrival of the euro could lead to an increase in money laundering. By Rachael Claye

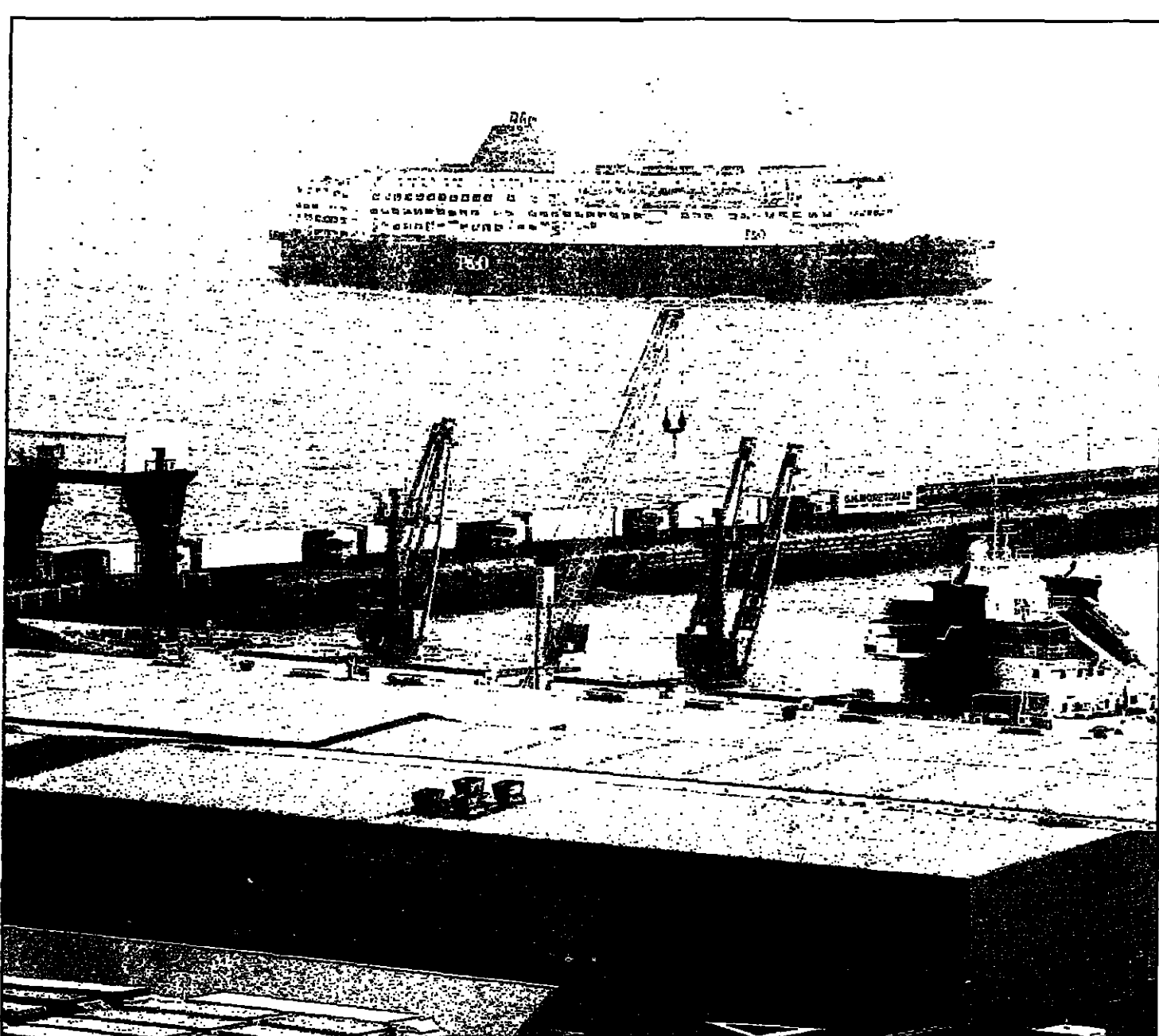
Criminals could end up as the unintended beneficiaries of the euro, if concerns being voiced in financial and legal circles are to be believed. With a single currency valid across 11 legal jurisdictions from this month, advisers in the financial services sector are urging banks and businesses to take seriously the possibility of a series of peaks in fraudulent activity.

Yet a counter-lobby of professional observers is quick to label the pessimists as scare-mongers. In their view, the central risk is not one of fraud against businesses. Instead, they believe the real issue is the potential suitability of the euro as a hard international currency for criminals operating at the money laundering and counterfeiting end of the black market. For police across the Continent, both prospects are a cause of very real concern.

For the three years from January 1999 to 2002, companies within the euro-zone will have the option of trading either in euros or in their own national currency. Gartner Group, a firm of American analysts, claims it is precisely this period of overlap that exposes companies to the risk of opportunist fraud. While businesses implement a radical overhaul of their IT systems and accounting procedures, discrepancies cropping up are likely to be treated as software errors or mistakes by staff, opening the way for both one-off insider fraud and more systematic theft.

But though the maths of euro conversion are more complex than other foreign currency exchanges, in terms of security risk it is little different from what the banks are already doing. Mark Tantom, the partner in charge of Deloitte & Touche's Fraud Management Service, argues that complex fraud techniques are being talked up at the expense of other hazards.

"The obvious fraud risks are where someone takes advantage of mistakes, and with year 2000 and the euro coming up, people are almost expecting a problem," says Tantom. "If the system goes down and data is wiped, they may blame a glitch in their software rather than suspect there is a deliberate attempt to cover up a fraud or remove the evidence, which makes the euro a perfect cover for the theft, sale or illegal use of company assets such as sensitive data."



The euro may make cross-border trade easier, but will it also help the criminals?

Tom Pilston

Where experts agree the scare stories are unlikely to prove exaggerated is in the areas of money laundering and counterfeiting. When the euro makes its debut in cash form in January 2002, 13 billion unfamiliar euro banknotes will enter the tills and pockets of a confused euro-population during the peak busy period of the January sales. Mistakes and minor swindles in day-to-day transactions are almost inevitable, but so too is a more organised attempt by criminals to get dirty money and forged notes into the legitimate banking system.

There are several ways this might be done. Banks, like solicitors and other service providers, have a duty to report unknown clients who seek advice or banking services involving sums of money that cannot be legitimately accounted for. Anyone trying to set up an account with a large number of small-denomination notes would be asked to explain where the money came from. But with high demand in January 2002 for conversion of cash savings into euros, vigilance may lapse. Two factors, the unfamiliarity of the currency and the increased workload for banks, increase the likelihood that forgers will try to feed counterfeit

into the system undetected. With its largest note set at 500 euros (over £300), the new currency's greatest asset to criminals could be its transportability. Money launderers require high-denomination notes for transporting large sums of dirty money in easily concealed physical quantities. Alan Davis, a solicitor specialising in European law and the euro with law

time, than the possibility of computer fraud during transition. There is a limit to how much the authorities can do. The design of the new notes is being kept quiet to give forgers as little time as possible to come up with a high-quality counterfeit. At the same time, the Money Laundering Directive of 1991 is being extended to increase the number of suspicious transactions re-

The design of the new notes is being kept quiet to give forgers as little time as possible to come up with a high-quality counterfeit

firm Wilde Sapte, argues both this factor and the attractions of the euro as an international hard currency could put it ahead of the current market leader, the \$100 bill, as the black market currency of choice. "You only have to look at Russia, where the dollar circulates as a parallel currency," says Davis. "The euro will become increasingly used as a similar parallel currency around the world. Money laundering is much more serious, and will be much more of an issue in 10 years'

ported, but it is a moot point whether the resources will be there to back the move up. At the moment, suspicious transaction reports in the UK are passed to the National Criminal Intelligence Service before being investigated by local police forces. According to one City lawyer, they lack the experts and time to follow the complex trail of transactions. There were 14,148 such reports in 1997, but between 1993 and 1996 only 25 convictions for money laundering. Detective superintendent Ken Far-

row, head of the City's fraud squad, says: "Resources have been drained away. The City and the Met are the only two forces with a substantial commitment to commercial crime. It is very difficult outside the capital to get adequate resources to do the investigation."

There are similar concerns at EU level. Despite the EU's efforts to improve communication between national intelligence bodies, Philip Martinus, a lawyer with the German law firm Beiten Burkhardt Mittl & Wegener, warns of the difficulties in putting an effective system in place: "Europol have not yet been vested with competence covering this area and they can collect data but they can't send their own policemen into the states and arrest somebody. So, of course, it will be difficult to pursue criminals on a European level."

The sensitivity of governments is likely to hinder any attempt to give a Europe-wide force real power, particularly as international organisations' agents are immune from prosecution by host states. It seems the difference in pace between the harmonisation of legal jurisdictions and economic integration could assist criminals in making the most of the single currency.

Losing sleep over losses in the City

YOU'D THINK, wouldn't you, that if you were launching something as important as a new currency, you'd pick a better time of year to do it. February, perhaps, when everyone's bored. Or March, when they're still bored. At any rate, not a week after Christmas and the day after New Year's Eve. It makes you wonder how firm a grip our Eurocrats have on reality, doesn't it? Perhaps every day is Christmas for them.

Anyway, thanks to their unhealthy obsession with the significance of 1 January - though in fact it's only been New Year's Day since 1752 - even Christmas Day wasn't really a holiday for us. When you know that a 16-hour stretch awaits you the next day and the next and the next, that bottle of champagne and those glasses of Baileys seem less enticing, somehow.

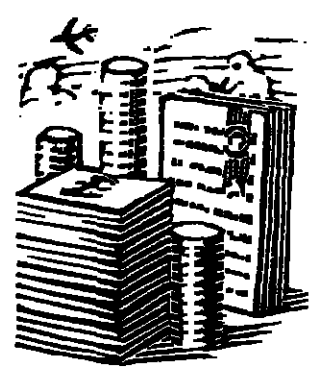
Laura and I tried protesting to Rory. As we pointed out, we only ever deal in dollar-denominated products, so why should we concern ourselves with the euro? We might as well have saved our breath. As far as our chief honcho was concerned, it was all hands on deck, with no exceptions at all.

"He probably just wants us where he can keep an eye on us," said Laura. "Thinks if we're not here, that we'll be at home dealing futures on our own account and losing millions."

"As you do, of course, when there's nothing good on TV," I said sarcastically.

So while everyone else was at home, flat out on the sofa watching Bond films, we were at our desks crunching numbers. Luckily, the computer system had a thorough overhaul two months ago, so it's been pretty straightforward to modify it. Still, you never know what may be thrown up on the day, so we've been testing and testing until our eyes cross.

Findlay is the only one of us who's really excited by the euro. As our resident rocket scientist, he gets to mess around in pretty much anything he wants, so a whole new currency is something to smile about. He has the credit department wrapped around his little finger, too, so they only say "no" to one of his deals once a month, just to show they can. The only thing



THE TRADER

that could make him happier would be one of our customers ringing up and asking about a euro deal, but we're six days in and it hasn't happened yet.

Luckily, we're a bit busier on the dollar side, otherwise I'd have nothing to distract me from the Great Watch Disaster. You'll remember - though not as painfully as I do - that I woke the day after our Christmas party with a man's watch on the bedside table. And since the last thing I recalled from the previous night was getting into a taxi with Jaap... well, you can see how I jumped to a ghastly conclusion.

Bad enough sleeping with your boss at the best of times, but it's even worse if you happen to have a lovely boyfriend, too. I thought I'd never be able to look Olivier in the face again. We would split up and I'd be miserable and it would all be my fault. Plus, of course, I'd have to leave my job as well. Unemployed and heartbroken: what a way that would be to start 1999.

Just as well, then, that Olivier rang me at work the same day to say he'd lost his watch somewhere and did I have it? Relief all round, until it turned out Jaap had also lost his watch. So whose watch was on my bedside table?

"That's what I want to know," Olivier yelled down the phone at me last night. "I've found my watch in my other coat. So who's been leaving his watch in your bedroom? And don't call me until you have an answer." And he hung up.

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NATASHA BOYD WORKS FOR FIONA MACINTOSH, THE EDITOR OF 'ELLE'

I came to Britain from New Zealand in August 1997, as part of my big OE - or Overseas Experience, as we Kiwis call it. I applied for a four-year work visa, and once in London I discovered that most of my home town friends were already over here. One day I was watching the Smash Hits Awards on TV, and it occurred to me that one of the things I would love to do while over here was to go to a big awards ceremony myself.

My degree in organisational and industrial psychology meant that I was well placed to work in the personnel field, but it was by sheer good luck that I was offered a temping job with the *Smash Hits* publishers, Emap, who are also responsible for *ELLE* magazine, my all-time favourite. I made a few key contacts within the company, and took the opportunity to send my CV around the building in the hope that I could remain with the company after my contract with personnel was over. It was a dream come true to be offered a temping job as PA to the editor of *ELLE*. I was so excited that I immediately called all my friends, both in London and in Wellington.

I admit that I was nervous at the prospect of working with such glamorous colleagues, but I hadn't anticipated how down to earth and friendly they would be. I've had a fantastic run of bosses here - first there was Marie O'Riordan, the editor at the time, who guided me into my job, since I hadn't been a PA before. We got along so well that Marie asked if I would apply for the position on a permanent basis, which I don't think I would have dared do without her encouragement.

When Marie was promoted, I worked for Ian Birch, the editor-in-chief of Emap. Ian, who stood in as acting editor for a while. While I thoroughly enjoyed working for Ian, I

found the prospect of the new permanent editor's arrival both exciting and a bit scary. But everyone assured me that Fiona and I would hit it off, and the moment she arrived I knew they were right. She's Australian, attractive, outgoing, and yet highly professional, and I don't have a bad word to say about her. People joke about our Antipodean solidarity, but I think that it's fantastic that she has made such a huge success of her career within such a competitive industry.

People assume that all Antipodeans have a "no worries"

'I still can't believe that I've come over here from little old Wellington, and got myself a job in one of the top fashion publications'

attitude towards everything. In my case they are wrong, because I do get stressed. Admittedly, when asked to do something I will almost always answer "it's not a problem", and usually it isn't. But I can get overloaded, since my role includes helping out the whole office so that they can focus their energy on the magazine itself, rather than the little, niggly things.

But, first and foremost, I am Fiona's PA, which involves lots of running around helping to organise her day. I also do the "mark-up", costing each issue to work out how much has been spent in putting it together. Another of my roles is to vet

incoming calls to the editor's office. Many queries I can deal with myself, and I find it surprising how some people go straight to the editor regardless of the nature of the call.

Despite the deadlines, the office is very laid-back, and we all like to have a good laugh together. My colleagues often arrive in the morning with great stories from the celebrity parties they went to the night before, and although I don't get sent invitations personally, I sometimes get taken along too. At one party I went to I found Kate Moss and Liv Tyler standing next to me, and I also achieved my original ambition of going to a fashion ceremony when we held the *ELLE* Style Awards. But the occasion exceeded my original wish, because, rather than just being part of the audience, I was asked to be up on the stage passing the awards over to the celebrity presenters. It was fantastic seeing my favourite supermodel, Helena Christensen, up close, and I even got to talk to Sophie Dahl. I just love the glamour of it all. Fiona enjoys partying, too, and it is common for her to bring out the champagne and the chocolate cake on someone's birthday so that the whole office can celebrate.

I still can't believe that I've come over here from little old Wellington and into one of the top fashion publications. My friends at home think I'm a star, and one friend's mum, who works in a newsagents, has been proudly showing her customers the picture of me in last month's *ELLE* - even though all you can see is my back! I never intended getting involved with magazines, but now, I'd like to keep the media thing going, because I feel so at home with it. I am hoping that this situation is going to set me up career-wise, and that this position will lead to even greater things.

INTERVIEW BY
KATIE SAMPSON



PA Natasha Boyd (left) with her boss, Fiona Macintosh, editor of 'ELLE' magazine

Phil Meech

My new life with the gnome of PussyKatz

FORTUNATELY I've been able to give up the chat line, as the Christmas period had proved, while lucrative, to be depressing. It's not hard keeping callers on the line for hours at a time at this time of year, as drunk and lonely tends to equal logorrhea, but you don't half feel guilty. So when Tracie rings and says she has a special job, and will pay me time-and-a-half for doing it, I say yes almost without thinking. I can't do this two-shift life any longer, if the bags under my eyes get any larger I'll be able to send myself off freight for a couple of weeks in the Caribbean.

"Sure," I say. "What's the job?"

Which is how I come to find myself at 2pm the next day,

ringing the doorbell of the flat above the PussyKatz club. I am to spend the next few weeks as personal assistant to Oscar Katz. You wouldn't tell it, but I'm knock-kneed with fear. For Oscar Katz's reputation as a sleaze is outstripped only by his notoriety for providing entertainment for even bigger sleazes.

The doorbell plays "Hey, Big Spender", and a couple of men walking past raise their eyebrows at me. I put on my most respectable face and stare them out. There's a "clunk" on the intercom. "Allo?" says a voice muffled in the mud of the Thames estuary.

"Hello, Mr Katz?" "Yer."

"I'm your new PA."

"Oh, right," He bellows. "Push

the door. Top floor. Penthouse. Har har. I'll just get myself decent."

The lock clicks back, and I enter a corridor vaguely reminiscent of a school stairwell, lined with that granite-filled concrete designed not to feel the knocks of passing trolleys. The Katz penthouse, it seems, is accessed via the service lift. When I get out at the top, I find a corridor that has been miraculously transformed into a whore's boudoir. Walls and ceiling are lined with a feisty purple velvet and the floor with a carpet of singular horridness: purple again, with a thin white check and polka dots at the intersections. I stare, gape-mouthed, until a voice behind me



THE TEMP

says: "It was left over when we did the club out. Nice, innit?"

I turn around. Leaning in the doorway is a wizened gnome with a footballer's haircut and straw highlights. He is wearing - I gulp - black satin pyjamas and a black satin wrap.

"Oscar Katz, darlin'," he says. "Hi, Mr Katz."

"Call me Oscar."

We shake hands, and he stares deep, deep into my eyes. Which must be quite hard work, as he doesn't come above my chin. "Come in," he says, and I step into the spider's parlour. Mirrors everywhere. White leather settee, fake-fur polar-bear rug, black-and-chrome bar complete with stools, dividing the room in half.

Oscar waves a hand over his domain. "Welcome," he says. "to my humble abode. Take a pew. Want a coffee? I haven't had no breakfast yet myself. Up 'til five I was."

Where the fireplace should be, there's a marble surround, and

over it, a huge oil painting, crudely executed, of two women with white beehive wigs, naked but for gloves and stockings, heads thrown back in gestures of ecstasy. "My first and second wives," says Oscar. "They'd kill me if they knew I'd got them doing that together." He plumps down in a white leather armchair, jiggles a foot.

"Now," he says, "I hope you've got stamina, girl."

"Reasonable, I think."

"Good." He gets out a six-inch ivory cigarette holder and a gold-plated lighter in the shape of a naked female torso, which he caresses with a thumb. "My last assistant couldn't take the pace. Shagged out, she was." He collapses in a heap of hilarity at

his double entendre. "Scuse my French," I laugh politely back.

The phone rings. You can tell it's ringing because not only does it trill, it lights up, neon pink and blue, on the glass coffee table in front of him. He stops, picks it up, goes "Allo, darlin'. No, I can't talk now. No, course I want to see yer, I'm just busy is all. Naar, look, Dolores, if you're going to be like that, we'd better call it a day. I told yer I can't bear to be tied down." Then he hangs up. Rolls his eyes. "Women," he says, "Can't live wiv 'em, can't pay 'em off."

"So tell me." He leans forward, flashes a set of perfectly capped teeth in my direction, "Ave yer ever been in one of my clubs?"

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We also require enthusiastic and capable team members to provide secretarial/admin support in all departments. Opportunities exist in Operations, Human Resources, Finance, Marketing and Food Development. You must have office experience and good working knowledge of Word and Excel.

If you feel you meet our criteria and would like to become part of our team, please send your CV to HR Department, Starbucks & Seattle Coffee Company, 11 Heathmans Road, London SW6 4TL. Closing date for all applications is 15th January 1999.

Starbucks is an equal opportunities employer committed to hiring a diverse workforce.

PERSONAL ASSISTANT

Prestigious Chelsea based Interior Designer, David Collins, requires a first class PA for immediate start. Competitive salary offered for efficient person with relevant experience. Well presented and confident with an excellent telephone manner. Applicants must work well under pressure in a varied environment combining PA skills with some reception duties. W4W and Excel essential. Please send/fax CV with salary requirements to:

Iain Watson @ David Collins
6/7 Chelsea Wharf, Lots Road,
London SW10 0QJ
Fax: 0171 352 7284

Email: iain@davidcollins.com

Office Assistant

required for a busy firm of corporate finance advisers, near Euston. We seek an enthusiastic young person, with initiative, to join our team of 23 staff to become involved in a varied role assisting our support team with filing, binding, post, photocopying and general office duties.

£12-14,000 p.a.
After qualifying period, season ticket loan available. Please write, enclosing your CV, to Annie Bremner at Livingstone Guarantee, Acre House, 11-15 William Road, London NW1 3ER. Fax: 0171 363 3369.

Strictly no agencies.

TEAM SECRETARY

£10-18K PLUS BENEFITS
Blue Chip Co. City
W4W Powerpoint, 50 wpm
STAFFWISE PLC
Tel: 0171 379 6388
Fax: 0171 379 6755

Agency

AUDIO SECRETARY/PA

Required for the Managing Director of a W1 professional firm. True 1:1 role. A good all rounder with Windows 95/Excel. Investment/finance background useful. CVs with a hand-written letter to:

Devonshire Financial Services Limited
76 New Cavendish Street
London W1M 7LB

OFFICE ASSISTANT

Bright, lively second jobber required to join happy team in busy walk-in Private GP Practices in the City. The duties are varied and include assisting the Office Manager and Reception Manager as there is plenty of administration. The successful candidate will have initiative and an eye for detail, together with ambition and a desire to grow. Computer literacy will be an advantage.

Please send a CV and hand written letter to: Alicia Chambers at General Medical Clinics PLC, The Fruit Exchange, Brushfield Street, London E1 6EN

PERSONAL ASSISTANT

£18K plus
Efficient PA required for busy Software Co. Varied role with lots of responsibility. Must be well spoken, good Windows Word skills and min three years experience.

Excellent Prospects

Tel: 0171 431 8222

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LEGAL SECRETARY

With the merger of Thomas Eggar Verrall Bowles and Church Adams Tatham our practice now has 40 partners and employs 350 staff within the company in five offices in London and the South East. We are seeking someone to work in our London office at Fulwood Place who has excellent secretarial skills, has worked at partnership level and has experience of working in civil litigation, this being custody problems, professional negligence and mortgage related problems. Acting as the department co-ordinating secretary, applicants should be well organised and able to provide support to the administrative work of two partners. Good IT skills are essential, candidates must be fully competent in MS Word 6, Excel and Windows 95 and have a mature attitude, good interpersonal skills and telephone manner, able to work under pressure when necessary.

We offer good conditions of employment along with a competitive salary and benefits package. If you are interested in joining our company please send a copy of your CV with details of your current salary to: Angela R. Whittington (Mrs), Personnel Advisor, Thomas Eggar Church Adams, Chatham Court, Leabourne Road, Raine, Surrey RH2 7TN.

TEAM SECRETARY

c. £18,000
Required by W1 Surveys Practice. Immediate Interviews. Min. 2 years office experience with 50 wpm dicto typing and WP skills. Word and Excel packages essential. Ability to 'troubleshoot' and assist at all levels and be a team player. Please send CV with hand-written covering letter stating current salary to:

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Required in small, long established and friendly law firm in South West London. To deal mainly with commercial and residential property work. Salary negotiable. Please forward CV to: Mr. K. Phillips, ELLIS & PUGH, 26 Old London Road, London SE17 2JL. Fax No. 0171 225 3525

To advertise in this section please call Valentine Quin or Zara White on 0171 323 4465

NEW FILMS

THE ACID HOUSE (18)

Director: Paul McGuigan
Starring: Stephen McCole, Kevin McKidd, Ewen Bremner
A trio of interrelated shorts culled from the stories of Irvine Welsh, *The Acid House* plays out in the down-and-dirty landscape of some of Edinburgh's less salubrious areas and darts with brio between a range of moods and tones. Story number one, "The Granton Star Cause", is a playful riff on Kafka's *Metamorphosis* as layabout wastrel Boab (McCole) gets conjured into a fly by the vengeful, boozing God (Maurice Rooves) whom he meets down the pub. Story two, "A Soft Touch", comes on as a kind of social-realist Special Brew opera, as his affable, emasculated hero (the brilliant Kevin McKidd) finds himself cheated on by his missus and menaced by the tattooed thug who lives upstairs. Story three, "The Acid House", is both the most ambitious and the least coherent, an indiscriminate what-if scenario which has Ewen Bremner's rave kid switching places with a newborn bairn. In it, the revelations of an acid-trip are cross-cut to the trauma of birth, yet a clever conceit stays unfilled, buried under a ton of showy hallucinogenics. Overall, though, debut director Paul McGuigan (who trained as a stills photographer) turns *The Acid House* into a bit of a triumph; adapting his style well to the shifting landscape of Welsh's tales and rustling up a film that's less poised and populist than *Trainspotting*, but more earthy, edgy and intense, too. A cracker, all told.
West End: Gate Nothing Hill, Odeon Camden Town, Plaza, Ritzy Cinema, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Haymarket, Warner Village West End

SITCOM (18)

Director: François Ozon
Starring: Evelyne Dandry, François Marthouret, Marina de Van
Someone ought to introduce François Ozon to a good editor. The debuting French film-maker is

clearly a man of talent, but in *Sitcom* he lets his ideas maraud madly off the leash. This scattergun satire on middle-class mores takes abundant pleasure in dismantling a standard nuclear family (*mere, père, fils et fille*) - setting a rat loose in the home and interjecting an implicitly queer and subversive vein to the increasingly fraught shenanigans. The result is sharp, funny and savage one moment, over-heated and indulgent the next, and arrives heavily touched by the influence of Luis Buñuel and John Waters. Ozon's still, formal framing strikes a nice balance with the craziness contained inside.
West End: Barbican Screen, Clapham Picture House, Curzon Soho, Virgin Chelsea

STAR TREK: INSURRECTION (PG)

Director: Jonathan Frakes
Starring: Patrick Stewart
A belated Christmas gift for Trekkies the land over, *Insurrection* hits the cinemas stuffed with in-the-know gags, ribboned and bowed with reliably cheesy art-design and effects work, and wrapped up in rather more cornball romance than we're used to.
The yarn is nominally about Patrick Stewart's do-gooding captain tangling with villainous F. Murray Abraham, who has hatched a scheme to take over an Eden-like planet of perpetual youth. The trouble is that the whole Star Trek phenomenon has become less a story now than a series of self-reflective gestures. *Insurrection* takes no real risks with the format; it simply navel-gazes for a while, gives doorspace to the regulars and idles its way along to the climactic explosion.
West End: ABC Baker Street, ABC Tottenham Court Road, Elephant & Castle Coronet, Empire Leicester Square, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero

Xan Brooks

GENERAL RELEASE

ANTZ (PG)

See *The Independent Recommends*, above.
West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Rio Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero

THE APPLE (SIB) (PG)

Seventeen-year-old Samirah Makhmalbaf's precocious debut stages a true-life recreation of the fortunes of Iran's Naderi sisters. A luminous and extraordinary missive from a burgeoning Iranian film scene. West End: Metro, Renoir

BABE: PIG IN THE CITY (U)

The follow-up to *Babe* tosses the hapless "sheep pig" into the midst of the city where he becomes the unlikely saviour of a bunch of assorted waifs.
West End: Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Plaza, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Trocadero

DANCING AT LUGHNASSA (PG)

Pat O'Connor's Ireland-set saga pinpoints the ebb and flow of an eccentric Catholic family in Donegal. What gives it backbone is Meryl Streep's regal performance as the brood's eldest sister, plus the ever watchable Michael Gambon as the homecoming brother. West End: Curzon Mayfair

THE DREAM LIFE OF ANGELS (18)

See *The Independent Recommends*, above.
West End: ABC Swiss Centre

ELIZABETH (15)

Shekhar Kapur's follow-up to *Bandit Queen* is the story of another female figurehead - this time it's Queen Elizabeth I - struggling to gain purchase in a male world. West End: ABC Pantons Street, Curzon Soho, Curzon Minima, Odeon Mezzanine, Phoenix Cinema, Rio Cinema, Virgin Fulham Road

ENEMY OF THE STATE (15)

Will Smith's fall-guy DA teams up with Gene Hackman's pensioned-off Pentagon warhorse, to probe a political cover-up and gets embroiled in all manner of Big Brother-type trouble. West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Clapham Picture House, Hammersmith Virgin, Nothing Hill Coronet, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Odeon West End, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, Screen on the Green, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Fulham Road

THE MASK OF ZORRO (PG)

This gaudy swashbuckler gallops at full-speed through 19th-century California in the company of Antonio Banderas's authentically Hispanic do-gooder. A bite-sized history lesson on West Coast politics jostles for purchase amid clattering action set-pieces. West End: Clapham Picture House, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Leicester Square, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road

THE MIGHTY (PG)

Peter Chelom's *The Mighty* treads through familiar coming-of-age country with its tale of two outcast kids (one fat, the other sickly) in a storybook Cincinnati. It's all a bit stolid and a tad predictable, though there's a glimmer of soul showing through. Sharon Stone and The X-Files' Gillian Anderson cope well in what basically amounts to supporting roles. West End: Screen on the Hill, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Haymarket

MY NAME IS JOE (15)

See *The Independent Recommends*, above.
West End: ABC Pantons Street, Curzon Soho, Virgin Haymarket

THE NEGOTIATOR (15)

Samuel L. Jackson and Kevin Spacey go head to head in Gray's thrilling drama. The script has a predilection for junk-headed swearing which sounds uneasy in the mouths of such articulate performers. West End: UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

OUT OF SIGHT (15)

See *The Independent Recommends*, above.
West End: Empire Leicester Square, Odeon

Kensington, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Phoenix Cinema, Rio Cinema, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero

THE PARENT TRAP (PG)

The Parent Trap catches Disney re-heating its 1961 Hayley Mills heart-warmer as this spy, cross-cultural caper starring Lindsay Lohan as the separated-at-birth twin sisters (one British, one American) trying to get their parents (Natalie Richardson, Dennis Quaid) back together. West End: Clapham Picture House, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Odeon West End, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea

A PERFECT MURDER (15)

With Hollywood awash with dumb re-makes, the news that Hitchcock's classic *Dial M for Murder* was to be rebashed did not bode well. But this is not bad at all. Michael Douglas stars as the cuckolded city shark who blackmails an artist into killing his heiress wife, Gwyneth Paltrow. This is good-plated trash: the sort of thing Hollywood does better than anyone else. West End: Warner Village West End

THE PHILADELPHIA STORY (U)

Sublime cinema. It's a fast-talking romantic comedy of course, but there's nothing silly or trivial about it. George Cukor's movie has a strange and melancholy heart and Katharine Hepburn's unsatisfied heiress sheds real tears. West End: Curzon Mayfair, Renoir

THE PRINCE OF EGYPT (U)

In planning his cartoon life of Moses, DreamWorks honcho Jeffrey Katzenberg envisaged it "painted by Claude Monet and photographed by David Lean". The end result winds up as *The Ten Commandments* by way of Joseph and his Technicolor Dreamcoat. West End: ABC Baker Street, ABC Tottenham Court Road, Clapham Picture House, Elephant & Castle Coronet, Empire Leicester Square, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero

RONIN (15)

Rather than adding value, John Frankenheimer's 40 years as a feature director lend an air of knackered resignation to his latest movie, which stars Robert De Niro. Thrill-an-hour stuff. West End: Odeon Mezzanine, Virgin Trocadero

RUSH HOUR (15)

Jackie Chan and Chris Tucker's star in this hit-and-miss affair. West End: Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Plaza, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY (15)

Ben Stiller, Cameron Diaz and Matt Dillon star in the latest comedy from the pathologically tasteless writer-director team of Peter and Bobby Farrelly (previous repulsive but shamefully funny crimes against humanity: *Dumb and Dumber* and *Kingpin*). The film is basically a soft-centred romantic comedy of the kind which drifts out of Hollywood on a regular basis. The gags never amount to more than vulgar icing on an unexceptionally bland cake. West End: ABC Piccadilly, Odeon Mezzanine

THE TRUMAN SHOW (PG)

See *The Independent Recommends*, above.
West End: Plaza, Virgin Trocadero

WHAT DREAMS MAY COME (15)

Along comes Christmas and out comes *What Dreams May Come*. Robin Williams perfects a lopsided stunner as the dead chap who lights out to a cod-Impressionist heaven, before jetting southward to rescue his suicide bride. West End: ABC Baker Street, ABC Shaftesbury Avenue, Clapham Picture House, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Haymarket, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

THE INDEPENDENT RECOMMENDS

THE FIVE BEST FILMS

The Truman Show (15)
Peter Weir's ingenious and unsettling fantasy is, in the end, an escape movie - in the case of Jim Carrey's Truman Burbank, it is breaking out of the round-the-clock TV docu-soap that is his own life.

Out of Sight (15)
This tale of love on opposite sides of the law from director Steven Soderbergh knocks spots off every previous Elmore Leonard adaptation, and boasts in George Clooney and Jennifer Lopez (right) the most romantic pairing of the cinematic year.

The Dream Life of Angels (18)
Erick Zanca's fine debut draws its strength from the personalities of Isa (Eloïse Bouchez) and Marie (Natacha Regnier), whose close friendship comes alive amid the drab environs of Lille.

Antz (PG)
Computer-animated comedy voiced by a stellar cast and starring Woody Allen as a worker ant who becomes an opponent of the colony's totalitarian regime. Allen's best work in a while.

My Name is Joe (15)
All that one would expect from a Ken Loach film - humour, indignation, emotional sympathy - driven by Peter Mullan's scary, intense performance as a recovering alcoholic.

THE FIVE BEST PLAYS

Love Upon the Throne
Comedy Theatre
The Charles and Diana story (well, up to the divorce) presented by the National Theatre of Brent. Hilarious and oddly touching. To 31 Jan

Martin Guerre West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds
It's third time lucky for this much-rewritten Boublil/Schönberg musical. In Connal Morrison's starkly involving production, it finally emerges as a tighter, magnificent show. To 13 Feb

Mr Puntilla and His Man Matti
Albany Theatre
A well-deserved transfer for this Almeida hit (right). Comedy duo The Right Size are inspired casting for Brecht's witty fable about a split-personality land-owner. To 9 Jan

Angela Carter Cinderella
Lyric, Hammersmith
This feast of inspired seasonal silliness and visual magic by Angela Carter has lashings of drag and double entendres, plus the best mice to be found anywhere on a West End stage. To 9 Jan

A Month in the Country
Swan Theatre, Stratford
Ireland's finest living dramatist, Brian Friel, adapts Turgenev's proto-Chekhovian comedy. To 30 Feb

THE FIVE BEST SHOWS

Charlotte Salomon
Royal Academy
"Life? Or Theatre?", Salomon's life in pictures. Her 405 raw gouaches (right) tell the story of the German Jewish girl's haste before Auschwitz - an expressionistic operetta in three colours. To 17 Jan

Grinling Gibbons
Victoria & Albert Museum
Fruit, flowers and foliage - the best choice-work of the great 17th-century English woodcarver, who made intricacy and the abundance of nature his trademark. To 24 Jan

Chris Orill
Whitworth Gallery, Manchester
This 1998 Turner Prize-winner is an upbeat original, his surfaces dense and decorative, with swirls of dots, Afros and black icons, and incorporating elephant dung. To 24 Jan

Goya: The Disparates
Maidstone Museum & Art Gallery
Goya was deaf, ill and in his seventies when he produced his last series of etchings. Mysterious in intention, it is a vivid world: life is folly, men fly off on wings into darkness. To 23 Jan

Edward Burne-Jones
Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery
This century exhibition gathers together many favourites illustrating Burne-Jones's romantic and medievalist inner world. To 17 Jan



ANTHONY QUINN

PAUL TAYLOR

TOM LUBBOCK

CINEMA

WEST END

ABC BAKER STREET
(0870-902 0418) @ Baker Street
The Prince of Egypt 1.40pm, 4pm
Star Trek: Insurrection 1.20pm, 3.40pm, 6pm, 8.30pm
What Dreams May Come 6.05pm, 8.35pm

ABC PANTONS STREET
(0870-902 0404) @ Piccadilly
Circus/Everest 1.20pm, 5.10pm, 8.10pm
The Last Days of Disco 1.10pm, 3.40pm, 6pm, 8.25pm
Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 1.10pm, 3.35pm, 6pm, 8.30pm
My Name is Joe 1.10pm, 3.35pm, 6pm, 8.25pm

ABC PICCADILLY
(0171-287 4322 (from 1pm)) @ Piccadilly
Circus/Everest 1.20pm, 5.10pm, 8.10pm
The Last Days of Disco 1.10pm, 3.40pm, 6pm, 8.25pm
Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 1.10pm, 3.35pm, 6pm, 8.30pm
My Name is Joe 1.10pm, 3.35pm, 6pm, 8.25pm

ABC SHAFTESBURY AVENUE
(0870-902 0402) @ Leicester
Square/Crosswalk 1.40pm, 4.10pm, 6.40pm, 8.55pm
What Dreams May Come 1.05pm, 3.40pm, 6.05pm, 8.30pm

ABC SWISS CENTRE
(0870-902 0403) @ Leicester
Square/Piccadilly Circus 1.40pm, 4.10pm, 6.40pm, 8.55pm
What Dreams May Come 1.05pm, 3.40pm, 6.05pm, 8.30pm

ABC TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD
(0870-902 0414) @ Tottenham
Court Road 1.40pm, 4.10pm, 6.40pm, 8.55pm
What Dreams May Come 1.05pm, 3.40pm, 6.05pm, 8.30pm

ABC TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD
(0870-902 0414) @ Tottenham
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What Dreams May Come 1.05pm, 3.40pm, 6.05pm, 8.30pm

CINEMA

LONDON LOCALS

ICA CINEMA
(0171-930 3647) @ Charing
Cross/West End 1.40pm, 4.10pm, 6.40pm, 8.55pm
What Dreams May Come 1.05pm, 3.40pm, 6.05pm, 8.30pm

METRO
(0171-734 1506) @ Piccadilly
Circus/Leicester Square 1.40pm, 4.10pm, 6.40pm, 8.55pm
What Dreams May Come 1.05pm, 3.40pm, 6.05pm, 8.30pm

NOTTING HILL CORONET
(0171-727 6705) @ Notting Hill
Gate Cinema of the State 3pm, 5.50pm, 8.30pm

ODEON CAMDEN TOWN
(0870-050007) @ Camden Town
The Prince of Egypt 1.40pm, 4.10pm, 6.40pm, 8.55pm
What Dreams May Come 1.05pm, 3.40pm, 6.05pm, 8.30pm

ODEON KENSINGTON
(0870-050007) @ High Street
Kensington Gate Cinema of the State 3pm, 5.50pm, 8.30pm

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(0870-050007) @ High Street
Kensington Gate Cinema of the State 3pm, 5.50pm, 8.30pm

CINEMA

LONDON LOCALS

ACTON
(0181-896 0066) @ Park Royal Antz
5.40pm, 7.40pm, 9.40pm
Babe: Pig in the City 1.20pm, 3.20pm, 5.20pm, 7.20pm, 9.20pm

EDMONTON
(0171-254 6677) @ Dalston
Kingsland The Big Lebowski 1.15pm, 3.15pm, 5.15pm, 7.15pm, 9.15pm

LEE VALLLEY UCI 12
(0990-888990) @ Tottenham Hale Antz
phone for details: Babe: Pig in the City phone for details: Babe: Pig in the City phone for details: Babe: Pig in the City

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phone for details: Babe: Pig in the City phone for details: Babe: Pig in the City phone for details: Babe: Pig in the City

LEE VALLLEY UCI 12
(0990-888990) @ Tottenham Hale Antz
phone for details: Babe: Pig in the City phone for details: Babe: Pig in the City phone for details: Babe: Pig in the City

WARNER VILLAGE (0181-427 9009) @ Harrow on the Hill Antz 5.50pm, 7.50pm. **Babe: Pig in the City** 1.05pm, 3.30pm. **Enemy of the State** 9.20am, 12.10pm, 12.55pm, 3pm, 3.50pm, 6pm, 6.40pm, 9pm, 9.25pm. **The Mask of Zorro** 11.25am, 2.25pm, 5.25pm, 8.30pm. **The Parent Trap** 1.20pm, 4.10pm, 6.55pm. **The Prince of Egypt** 11.50am, 2.05pm, 4.35pm, 6.50pm, 9.15pm. **Rush Hour** 12noon, 2.15pm, 4.45pm, 7.05pm, 9.35pm, 10pm. **Star Trek: Insurrection** 1.15pm, 3.40pm, 6.10pm, 8.45pm. **What Dreams May Come** 1.30pm, 4pm, 6.30pm, 9.05pm.

HOLLOWAY
ODEON (08705 050007) @ Holloway Road/Archway Antz 12.10pm. **Babe: Pig in the City** 12.10pm. **Enemy of the State** 12noon, 2.20pm, 2.45pm, 5.10pm, 5.35pm, 8pm, 8.35pm. **The Mask of Zorro** 2.45pm, 5.10pm, 5.35pm, 8pm, 8.35pm. **The Parent Trap** 12.25pm, 3.05pm. **The Prince of Egypt** 12.10pm, 2.20pm, 4.35pm, 6.50pm. **Rush Hour** 3.55pm, 6.25pm, 8.25pm, 9.05pm. **Star Trek: Insurrection** 1.15pm, 3.45pm, 6.20pm, 8.50pm. **What Dreams May Come** 12.40pm, 3.05pm, 5.45pm, 8.50pm.

KILBURN
THE TRICYLE CINEMA (0171-328 1000) @ Kilburn Enemy of the State 6.20pm, 8.55pm.

KINGSTON UPON THAMES
ABC OPTIONS (0870-9020409) BR: Kingston Babe: Pig in the City 12.15pm. **Enemy of the State** 5.10pm, 8.05pm. **The Parent Trap** 2.25pm. **The Prince of Egypt** 1.15pm, 3.30pm. **Star Trek: Insurrection** 1.15pm, 3.40pm, 6.05pm, 8.30pm.

MUSWELL HILL
ODEON (08705 050007) @ Highgate Enemy of the State 2.50pm, 4.45pm, 8.25pm. **The Mask of Zorro** 5.10pm, 8.15pm. **The Parent Trap** 12.50pm, 3pm. **Star Trek: Insurrection** 1.10am, 1.50pm, 4.15pm, 6.35pm, 8.50pm.

PRESTON
PREMIER (0181-235 3006) BR: Peckham Rye Antz 1.50pm. **Babe: Pig in the City** 12noon. **Enemy of the State** 12.35pm, 3.20pm, 6.05pm, 8.50pm, 11.35pm. **The Mask of Zorro** 3.30pm, 6.15pm, 9pm. **The Mighty 8.30pm**. **The Parent Trap** 1.15pm, 3.40pm. **The Prince of Egypt** 2.35pm. **Rush Hour** 2.45pm, 5pm, 7.15pm, 9.40pm. **Star Trek: Insurrection** 4.30pm, 7.05pm, 9.20pm. **What Dreams May Come** 4.35pm, 7pm, 9.25pm.

PURLEY
ABC (0870-9020407) BR: Purley Babe: Pig in the City 12.05pm. **Enemy of the State** 4.10pm, 8pm. **The Parent Trap** 2.20pm. **Star Trek: Insurrection** 12.55pm, 3.20pm, 6.20pm, 8.30pm. **What Dreams May Come** 5.50pm, 8.20pm.

PUTNEY
ABC (0870 9020401) @ Putney Bridge BR: Putney Babe: Pig in the City 1.15pm. **Enemy of the State** 5.15pm, 8.15pm. **The Parent Trap** 2.15pm. **Star Trek: Insurrection** 3.30pm, 6pm, 8.30pm. **What Dreams May Come** 5.45pm, 8.25pm.

RICHMOND
ODEON (08705 050007) @ Richmond Antz 12noon. **Babe: Pig in the City** 12.10pm, 3pm, 6pm, 9pm. **Star Trek: Insurrection** 1.30pm, 4pm, 6.50pm, 9.30pm.

ODEON LIBERTY (08705 050007) BR: Richmond Antz 12noon. **Babe: Pig in the City** 12.10pm, 3pm, 6pm, 9pm. **Star Trek: Insurrection** 1.30pm, 4pm, 6.50pm, 9.30pm.

ROCHFORD
ABC (0870-9020419) BR: Rochford Babe: Pig in the City 12.30pm. **Enemy of the State** 5.20pm, 8.10pm. **The Parent Trap** 2.40pm. **The Prince of Egypt** 12.55pm, 3.05pm. **Star Trek: Insurrection** 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.35pm. **What Dreams May Come** 5.40pm, 8.20pm.

ODEON LIBERTY (08705 050007) BR: Rochford Antz 12noon. **Babe: Pig in the City** 12.30pm, 3pm, 6pm, 9pm. **Star Trek: Insurrection** 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.35pm. **What Dreams May Come** 5.40pm, 8.20pm.

ROCHFORD
ABC (0870-9020419) BR: Rochford Babe: Pig in the City 12.30pm. **Enemy of the State** 5.20pm, 8.10pm. **The Parent Trap** 2.40pm. **The Prince of Egypt** 12.55pm, 3.05pm. **Star Trek: Insurrection** 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.35pm. **What Dreams May Come** 5.40pm, 8.20pm.

ODEON LIBERTY (08705 050007) BR: Rochford Antz 12noon. **Babe: Pig in the City** 12.30pm, 3pm, 6pm, 9pm. **Star Trek: Insurrection** 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.35pm. **What Dreams May Come** 5.40pm, 8.20pm.

STAPLES CORNER
VIRGIN (0870-9070717) BR: Cricklewood Enemy of the State 12.15pm, 3.15pm, 6.15pm, 9.10pm. **The Mask of Zorro** 12noon, 2.40pm, 5.30pm, 8.15pm. **The Parent Trap** 1.10pm, 3.40pm, 6.10pm, 8.40pm. **Star Trek: Insurrection** 1.30pm, 4pm, 6.30pm, 9.05pm.

ODEON (08705 050007) BR: Seadham Hill Babe: Pig in the City 1.10pm. **Enemy of the State** 5.10pm, 8.10pm, 12.10pm, 2.20pm, 2.45pm, 5.40pm, 8.25pm. **The Mask of Zorro** 12.20pm, 3pm. **The Parent Trap** 12.20pm, 3pm. **The Prince of Egypt** 12.15pm, 2.20pm, 4.30pm, 6.35pm. **Rush Hour** 3.30pm, 5.50pm, 8.30pm. **Star Trek: Insurrection** 1.30pm, 3.50pm, 6.10pm, 8.40pm.

STRAFORD
NEW STRAFORD PICTURE HOUSE (0181-555 3366) BR: Stratford East Babe: Pig in the City 1.45pm. **The Mask of Zorro** 12.10pm, 3pm, 5.50pm, 8.35pm. **The Parent Trap** 12.40pm, 2.05pm, 4.30pm, 6.45pm. **Star Trek: Insurrection** 3.45pm, 6.15pm, 9.10pm. **What Dreams May Come** 3pm.

SUTTON
UCI 6 (0990-888990) @ Morden Antz phone for details. **Babe: Pig in the City** phone for details. **Enemy of the State** phone for details. **The Mask of Zorro** phone for details. **The Parent Trap** phone for details. **The Prince of Egypt** phone for details. **Rush Hour** phone for details. **Star Trek: Insurrection** phone for details. **What Dreams May Come** phone for details.

TURNPIKE LANE
CORNET (0181-888 2519) @ Turnpike Lane. **Enemy of the State** 3pm, 5.45pm, 8.20pm. **The Prince of Egypt** 4.10pm, 6.30pm, 8.35pm.

UXBRIDGE
ODEON (08705 050007) @ Uxbridge Dr. **Doyle** 11.40am. **Enemy of the State** 2.10pm, 5.20pm, 8.15pm. **The Prince of Egypt** 12noon. **Star Trek: Insurrection** 1.25pm, 3.50pm, 6.15pm, 8.40pm.

WALTHAMSTOW
ABC (0870-9020424) @ Walthamstow Central. **Babe: Pig in the City** 12.45pm. **Enemy of the State** 5.20pm, 8pm. **The Parent Trap** 1.20pm, 4.10pm, 6.30pm. **Star Trek: Insurrection** 1.20pm, 3.40pm, 6pm, 8.20pm. **What Dreams May Come** 5.55pm, 8.20pm.

WALTON ON THAMES
THE SCREEN AT WALTON (01932-252825) BR: Walton on Thames. **Enemy of the State** 5.25pm, 8.10pm. **The Parent Trap** 2.35pm. **Star Trek: Insurrection** 4.15pm, 6.30pm, 8.45pm.

WELL HALL
CORNET (0181-650 3351) BR: Eitham. **The Prince of Egypt** 4.10pm, 6.30pm, 8.35pm.

WIMBLEDON
ODEON (08705 050007) BR: Wimbledon @ South Wimbledon Antz 11.30am. **Babe: Pig in the City** 11.45am. **Enemy of the State** 11.45am, 2.30pm, 5.25pm, 8.20pm. **The Mask of Zorro** 1.55pm, 5pm, 8.10pm. **The Parent Trap** 1.20pm, 3.55pm. **Rush Hour** 6.30pm, 8.45pm. **Star Trek: Insurrection** 12.25pm, 3.10pm, 5.55pm, 8.45pm. **What Dreams May Come** 6pm, 8.35pm.

WOODFORD
ABC (0181-989 3463) @ South Woodford. **Babe: Pig in the City** 12.30pm. **Enemy of the State** 5.20pm, 8.10pm. **The Parent Trap** 1.20pm, 3.50pm. **Star Trek: Insurrection** 1.20pm, 3.40pm, 6.10pm, 8.40pm. **What Dreams May Come** 5.40pm, 8.20pm.

WOOLWICH
CORNET (0181-854 5043) BR: Woolwich Arsenal. **Enemy of the State** 3pm, 5.45pm, 8.20pm. **The Prince of Egypt** 4.10pm, 6.30pm, 8.35pm.

CINEMA
REPERTORY

LONDON
South Bank SE1 (0171-928 3232) **Saving Private Ryan** (15) 2pm. **Primary Colors** (15) 6pm. **The Roaring Twenties** (PG) 6.15pm. **Popeye the Sailor - 70 Years Young: Museum Special Event** (NC) 7.30pm. **High Sierra** (NC) 8.30pm. **Saturday Night Fever** (18) 8.40pm.

PRINCE CHARLES Leicester Place. **Only 1pm** (PG) 1.15pm. **Life on a Stick** (PG) 3.45pm. **Good Will Hunting** (15) 8.40pm.

RIVERSIDE STUDIOS Crisp Road. **W6** (0171-420 0100) **When the Cat's Away** (15) 6.45pm. **L'Appartement** 8.40pm.

WATERMANS ARTS CENTRE High Street, Brentford, Middlesex. **0181-568 1176** (PG) 15pm. **7pm** **Dancing at Lughnasa** (PG) 9pm, 9.50pm.

BRIGHTON
DUKE OF YORKS (01273-602503) **My Name is Joe** (15) 4.15pm, 9.15pm. **Henry Fool** (18) 6.30pm.

BRIGHTON
WATERED (0171-925 3845) **On Commat** La Chanson (PG) 5.45pm, 8.20pm. **The Land Girls** (12) 6pm. **Motivations** (NC) 8.30pm.

CAMBRIDGE
ARTS CINEMA (01223-504444) **My Name is Joe** (15) 12.30pm, 7.15pm. **The El** (18) 3pm, 9.20pm. **The Truman Show** (PG) 5.10pm.

CARDIFF
CHAPTER ARTS CENTRE (01222-399666) **Year of the Horse** (15) 2.30pm, 8pm. **Pépé le Moko** (15) 7.30pm.

CHESTER
NEW PARK CINEMA (01243-786650) **Mundun** (12) 3.15pm. **The Governors** (15) 6.15pm. **Still Crazy** (15) 9pm.

IPSWICH
FILM THEATRE (01473-215544) **Elizabeth** (15) 6pm, 8.30pm. **La Vie Reve des Anges** (18) 6pm, 8.15pm.

CINEMA
COUNTRYWIDE

CARDIFF
ABC (0541-555178) **Antz** (PG) **Babe: Pig in the City** (U); **Blade** (15); **The Prince of Egypt** (U); **Rush Hour** (15).

CAPITOL ODEON (08705-050007) **Babe: Pig in the City** (U); **Enemy of the State** (15); **The Mask of Zorro** (15); **Rush Hour** (15); **Star Trek: Insurrection** (PG); **What Dreams May Come** (15).

ODEON (08705-050007) **Antz** (PG); **The Mighty** (PG); **Out of Sight** (15); **The Parent Trap** (PG).

UCI 12 (0990-888990) **Antz** (PG); **Babe: Pig in the City** (U); **Blade** (18); **Enemy of the State** (15); **Nuch Yuch Hota Hai** (PG); **Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels** (18); **The Mask of Zorro** (15); **Out of Sight** (15); **The Parent Trap** (PG); **The Prince of Egypt** (U); **Rush Hour** (15); **Small Soldiers** (PG); **Star Trek: Insurrection** (PG); **There's Something About Mary** (15); **What Dreams May Come** (15).

THEATRE
WEST END

Ticket availability details are for today: times and prices for the week: running times include intervals.
— Seats at all prices — Seats at some prices — Returns only. **Matinees** — [1], Sun, [3], Tue, [4], Wed, [5], Thur, [6], Fri, [7], Sat.

ALARMS & EXCURSIONS Michael Frayn's new comedy about a dinner party which is interrupted by mysterious messages from the past. **Felicity Kendal** and **Josie Lawrence**. **Gloucester Theatre, W1** (0171-494 5065) @ Pic. **Mon-Sat** 7.45pm, [5][7] 3pm, £19.50-£27.50, 130 mins.

AMADEUS David Suchet stars as Salieri in Peter Shaffer's acclaimed play. **Old Vic Theatre, W1** (0171-928 7616) @ 420 0000. **BR/VE Waterloo**. **Mon-Sat** 7.30pm, [4] 2.30pm, [7] 3pm, £19.50-£30, 180 mins.

ANNIE Rags to riches story of the optimistic orphan. **Victoria Palace Theatre, SW1** (0171-834 1317) **BR/VE** **Victoria**. **Tue-Sat** 7.30pm, [4][7] 2.30pm, [11] 4pm, £7.50-£32.50, 165 mins.

ART LARRY LAMB Jack Dee, Tim Healy in Yasmina Reza's comedy about art and friendship. **Wyndham's Theatre, W1** (0171-967 1111) @ Lek Sq. **Tue-Sat** 8.00pm, [4] 3.00pm, [7][11] 5.00pm, £9.50-£27.50, 90 mins.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST Lavish family musical based on Disney's cartoon version of the fairytale. **Fair Play Theatre, W1** (0171-656 1888) @ Pic. **Mon-Sat** 7.30pm, [5][7] 2.30pm, £18.50-£35, 150 mins.

BLOOD BROTHERS Willy Russell's long-running Liverpool musical melodrama. **Phoenix Cinema, W2** (0171-369 1733) @ Lek Sq/Tot Ct Rd. **Mon-Sat** 7.45pm, [5] 3.00pm, [7] 4.00pm, £11.50-£32.50, 165 mins.

BOOGIE NIGHTS Shane Richie stars in a brand new 1970s musical. **Savoy Theatre, W1** (0171-933 8888) @ 0171-836 0479. **Charing X/Embankment**. **Mon-Thurs** 8pm, **Fri-Sat** 8.30pm, [6] 5.30pm, [7] 5pm, ends 9 Jan, £11-£28.50, 150 mins.

BUDDY Musical biog-show tracing the brief life of Buddy Holly. **Strand Arches, W2** (0171-930 8800) @ Covent Garden/Charing X. **Tue-Thurs** 8pm, **Fri-Sat** 8.30pm, **Sat** 5.00pm & 8.30pm, mats [1] 4pm, £10-£27, half price Friday matinee, 150 mins.

CATS Lloyd Webber's musical version of T.S. Eliot's poems. **New London Theatre, W2** (0171-405 0072) @ 0171-404 4079. **Holborn**. **Mon-Sat** 7.45pm, [3][7] 3.00pm, £12.50-£35, 165 mins.

CHICAGO Maria Friedman and Peter Davison star in this hit Broadway musical. **Adelphi Theatre, W2** (0171-416 0355) @ Charing X. **Mon-Sat** 8pm, [4][7] 3pm, £16-£36 (inc booking fee), 130 mins.

CINDERELLA Angela Carter's version of this fairytale is staged by the acclaimed **Improbable Theatre**. **Lyric Theatre, W6** (0181-741 2311) @ Hammersmith. **Tuesday 1.30pm & 7pm, ends 9 Jan, £5-£18, concs £6.50.**

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (ABRIDGED) Reduced Shakespeare Company last forward through 37 plays. **Chichester Theatre, W1** (0171-369 1747) @ Pic. **Mon-Sat** 8.00pm, [5] 3.00pm, [7] 5.00pm, [11] 4.00pm, £6-£25, Tue mats - all seats £10, 120 mins.

OR DOULTIE Philip Schofield talks to the animals in this new stage adaptation featuring **Jim Henson Puppets**. **London Apollo Theatre, W6** (0171-416 8222) @ Hammersmith. **Tue-Sat** 7.30pm, [4][7] 2.30pm, £10-£32.50, 150 mins.

GREASE Energetic stage version of the hit film. **Cambridge Theatre, W2** (0171-494 5080) @ Covent Garden. **Mon-Sat** 7.30pm, [4][7] 3.00pm, £10-£30, 150 mins.

AN IDEAL HUSBAND Christopher Cazenove and Susannah York in Peter Shaffer's acclaimed production of **Wilde's comedy**. **Lyric Theatre, W6** (0171-416 8222) @ Hammersmith. **Tue-Sat** 7.30pm, [4][7] 2.30pm, £10-£32.50, 150 mins.

INTO THE WOODS Southend and Lapine's acclaimed musical based on fairytales. **Donmar Warehouse, E1** (0171-732 369) @ Covent Garden. **Mon-Sat** 7.30pm, [4][7] 2.30pm, £15-£27.50.

THE INVENTION OF LOVE Tom Stoppard's play about the life of poet & 18th-century author of **The Strife of Hamlet**. **Strand Arches, W2** (0171-930 8800) @ Pic. **Mon-Sat** 7.30pm, [4][7] 2.30pm, £10-£32.50.

JESUS, MY BOY Tom Conti stars in John Dowling's alternative Christmas show. **Apollo Theatre, W6** (0171-416 8222) @ Hammersmith. **Tue-Sat** 7.30pm, [4][7] 2.30pm, £15-£27.50.

LOVE UPON THE THRONE Tasted look at the Charles and Diana marriage. **Comedy Panopticon, SW1** (0171-369 1731) @ Pic. **Circ/Lek Sq**. **Mon-Sat** 8pm, [4][7] 3pm, ends 9 Jan, £7.50-£25.

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THE INVENTION OF LOVE Tom Stoppard's play about the life of poet & 18th-century author of **The Strife of Hamlet**. **Strand Arches, W2** (0171-930 8800) @ Pic. **Mon-Sat** 7.30pm, [4][7] 2.30pm, £10-£32.50.

MISS SAIGON Musical which re-tells the *Madam Butterfly* tragedy to Vietnam. **Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, W1** (0171-494 5065) @ Covent Garden. **Mon-Sat** 7.45pm, [4][7] 3.00pm, £5.75-£35, 165 mins.

THE MOUSETRAP Agatha Christie's whodunit. **St Martin's Theatre, W2** (0171-836 1445) @ Lek Sq. **Mon-Sat** 8.00pm, [3] 2.45pm, [7] 5.00pm, £10-£24.50, 135 mins.

MIR PUNTILA AND HIS MAN Matti Seppälä and Hamish McCorrie star in a new version of Brecht's comedy satire. **Albany Theatre, W1** (0171-494 5065) @ Pic. **Mon-Sat** 7.45pm, [5][7] 3pm, £19.50-£27.50, 130 mins.

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA Andrew Lloyd Webber's Gothic musical. **Her Majesty's Theatre, SW1** (0171-494 5400) @ 0171-344 4444. **Pic. Circ.** **Mon-Sat** 7.45pm, [4][7] 3.00pm, £10-£35, 150 mins.

RENT Musical inspired by La Bohème and set in modern day New York. **Shaftesbury Theatre, W1** (0171-369 1733) @ Holborn/Tot Ct Rd. **Mon-Sat** 7.30pm, [4][7] 3pm, £12.50-£32.50

